RECRUITMENT AND SERVICE IN THE KING'S AFRICAN RIFLES IN THE SECOND WORLD WAR

A Dissertation submitted to the
Faculty of Arts at the
University of Bristol,
in fulfilment of the requirements
for admission to the
Degree of Master of Letters.

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October 1985

A B S T R A C T

The aim of the thesis is to examine the criteria by which British civil and military officials in East Africa selected African recruits for the King's African Rifles and its ancillary units. The scope of the thesis is limited to the Second World War although reference is made to the recruitment of East Africans before the war.

The first chapter sets out to ascertain why some East African peoples were recruited in large numbers while others were not. This raises the question of the extent to which the racial composition of the army was determined by official policy, by the informal opinions of British officers or by the willingness of particular African peoples to come forward as recruits. An attempt has therefore been made to examine tribal stereotyping by British officials in East Africa and to assess the reasons why certain African peoples were thought to possess qualities which gave them an aptitude for soldiering. At the same time African incentives for joining the army are considered as well as the reasons why the KAR was more attractive to some groups than others.

The thesis traces the development of recruitment in East Africa during the war when the War Office deployed East Africans first in the Abyssinian campaign, second as Pioneers and Labourers in the North Africa campaign, and lastly as combatants in the Madagascar and Burma campaigns. It examines how the expansion of the KAR altered the character of the

regiment and how the pattern of recruitment changed. It sets out to demonstrate the changes in the criteria which were used in the choice of recruits in response to an urgent need for African manpower as the war progressed.

The second chapter deals with recruitment for the North African campaign and balances the introduction of conscription for non-combatants against British efforts to make the Pioneers and the KAR more attractive to Africans. The third chapter discusses the need for a new type of African soldier, capable of handling more sophisticated weaponry in the struggle against the Japanese in Burma. British reviewal of traditional tribal stereotypes in the light of new military circumstances is evaluated and an explanation is given as to why certain African peoples now joined the KAR when they had not previously done so.

A further theme examines the conflict between military and labour recruitment and the choices available to Africans as a result of the alternative employment available to them. An attempt is made to analyse the ways in which official industrial, agricultural and military priorities affected recruitment in certain areas.

The fourth chapter deals briefly with demobilisation, showing how this became a concern of the British civil and military authorities at an early stage in the war when they were still recruiting. It aims to establish a link between the tribal composition of the KAR and the comparatively smooth resettlement of ex-askaris.

The epilogue draws certain parallels between recruitment in East and West Africa during the Second World War. Although there is no detailed, in-depth examination of recruitment in West Africa, it is possible to note similarities between British recruiting policies and tribal stereotyping in both regions of the continent.

Because of the insuperable difficulties encountered in trying to visit East Africa, it was impossible to interview Africans whose views on recruitment to the KAR may have differed markedly from those of the British officials involved. Nor is there available any documentation which can throw direct light upon African opinion. This limitation is fully appreciated by the candidate who has, therefore, felt it necessary to focus the thesis upon British views.

I certify that this dissertation incorporates no material previously submitted for a degree or diploma of any university. It reflects the original work of the author, without collaboration, except where appropriate reference and acknowledgement is made in the text.

Jennifer Warner

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

For his constant encouragement, advice and hospitality I would like to thank Professor Kenneth Ingham. I would also like to thank George Badger, Peter Bleackley, Colin Campbell, Brian Kirwan, Tony Richards, George Webster and Colonel Humphrey Williams, all of whom contributed to this thesis by giving interesting oral interviews. In particular I thank Brian Kirwan for giving two interviews. I thank Mr J.D. Thomson of Fochabers, Morayshire, who volunteered a fascinating account of his experiences in East Africa in a personal communication to the author. I thank Dr David Killingray for his interest in my work and his kind invitation to the SOAS conference on Africa and the Second World War in May 1984. I acknowledge the help of the staff at Rhodes House Library, Oxford, the Public Records Office, the Foreign and Commonwealth Office Library, Colindale Newspaper Library and the Department of History at the University of Bristol. For financial support towards tuition fees, I acknowledge the assistance of the County of Avon Education Authority. I thank Peter Isaac, Headmaster of Patchway High School, for his support in arranging my study leave. I thank my parents for their encouragement. I am very grateful for the enthusiastic interest and the warm hospitality of Elizabeth Ingham. Finally, I thank Lesley Wraight who typed this manuscript.

INTRODUCTION

The King's African Rifles was the military force which served the British dependencies in Eastern Africa. The thesis title refers to the recruitment and service of troops within this Regiment. It is not intended to write a detailed study of the military campaigns in which the Regiment took part during the Second World War. The only references to service are those which relate to the effects of living conditions in the KAR upon recruitment.

The official inauguration of the King's African Rifles took place on 1st January 1902 but troops had been raised and Regiments established independently in each territory long before that date. The Regiment was called 'Rifles' because all the original Regiments were so-called: the Central African Rifles which served British Central Africa (later Nyasaland), the Uganda Rifles and the East African Rifles which served British East Africa (later Kenya). The KAR was an infantry regiment originally including several Indian officers and troops. By the time of the Second World War it was officered by Europeans and its rank and file were Africans. It recruited in and served Nyasaland, Uganda, Kenya, Tanganyika and British Somaliland.

The first Africans to be organised into a KAR infantry battalion were the Nyasas. Their history as members of a British armed force dates from shortly after the discovery of Lake Nyasa by David Livingstone. This famous missionary and explorer believed that the best way to spread the

Christian gospel in Africa was to bring to the people the material benefits of European civilization because without the security they provided, his audiences, harrassed by slave raiders, would be unreceptive to Christ's teachings. Missions must be stationed in the interior of the continent where the missionaries could make an impact on the remoter African peoples. Linking the mission station to the coast by means of a safe river route would help to serve Africans in two ways, he thought. They could be provided with medical supplies, trade goods and implements to improve food production and at the same time evangelists could use the same route into the interior. With this plan in mind, he set out to explore the Zambezi River in 1858.

In Britain there was considerable philanthropic support for Livingstone's aims to overcome the Arab slave trade in East Africa. He also received financial sponsorship from the British government. Although Livingstone experienced many difficulties in navigating the Zambezi, his exploration of one of its northern tributaries, the Shire, led him to Lake Nyasa. In 1861 a group of missionaries under the leadership of Bishop Mackenzie arrived at the mouth of the Zambezi. Here they were met by Livingstone who guided them inland to the area of the Nyanja tribe, a people who were subject to frequent attacks by Yao slavers and were ripe for missionary influence. Sickness and poor supply routes forced the missionaries to abandon the area but British interest in the slave trade had been awakened and successful missionary activity followed. The Church Mission Society encouraged the British government to control

the slave trade in the Indian Ocean and plans were made to provide settlements for freed slaves which would also serve as bases from which missionaries could go out and make new converts.

Geographers too were interested in Livingstone's discoveries and urged him to continue his exploration of East Africa. In August 1866 Livingstone arrived at Lake Nyasa once more and came across lakeside villages which had suffered greatly at the hands of the Arab slave traders. Although Livingstone died before he could combat the slave trade in this area, his diaries revealed its horrors and in 1874 the Free Church of Scotland took up his scheme to station a mission near Lake Nyasa.[1] A year later their representatives arrived at Mandala, at the southern end of the lake. They were the pioneers of permanent British settlement in Nyasaland.

Commercial interests soon followed. The Livingstonia Central Africa Trading Company was founded to supply the Mandala mission station. A road was built to connect the north of Lake Nyasa to the south of Lake Tanganyika. A few coffee planters and traders began to settle in the Shire highlands and in 1883 a British Consul was appointed. In 1884, the African Lakes Company, the successor to the Livingstonia Central Africa Trading Company, built a trading station at Karonga on the northern shore of Lake Nyasa.[2] A steamer service linked Karonga to the River Shire.

Both missionary and commercial activities came into contact and conflict with the Arab and Yao slavers, resulting in the 'Slavers' War'. For the first time white entrepreneurs

attempted to train the indigenous Nyasas as troops. In the war against the Arabs and their allies, the Yao and Ngoni, the British enlisted the Nkonde to fight for them. They chose this group deliberately because they were constant victims of the slavers and had good reason to take up arms in defence of their people and villages. Although the Arabs were defeated on this occasion, the traders, missionaries and white settlers in Nyasaland were nevertheless pleased to take the advice of Captain F.D. Lugard[3] who came to offer his services as a military leader. Lugard expanded the Nyasaland native force to include the Tonga, Jawa and Mbwe, all victims of the warlike Ngoni. He gave them simple drill and musketry training but after some failures and successes against the slavers, Lugard recognised the need for a properly armed and disciplined force. He proposed that 1000 troops should be raised locally and officered by Indians. His plans were put into effect when Nyasaland became a British Protectorate in 1891.

Captain C.M. Maguire of the 2nd Hyderabad Lancers was on the staff of the first Commissioner of Nyasaland. Maguire raised 70 volunteers from the Indian Army, 40 Sikhs from the 23rd and 32nd Pioneers and 30 Moslem cavalrymen from the Hyderabad Lancers. Their HQ was at Zomba which was to become an important KAR recruiting centre in later years. Maguire's force soon saw action against the Arab slavers to the North of the Lake and Yao to the South. The British came to terms with the Arabs but the Yao continued to be a threat and in 1893 the Protectorate forces were reorganised and strengthened by enlisting Africans as regulars. Local

men were preferred because they were cheaper to employ than those brought in from elsewhere; the Zanzibaris and Makua. The Sikhs still remained as the mainstay of the force although the Government of India expressed concern because the best men were being drawn away from the Indian Army by the more attractive wages offered to them in Nyasaland. In 1896 the remaining Makua were replaced by locals and the force began to enlist the Yao when the war against the Arabs reopened. By this time there were six companies of the Central Africa Rifles, consisting of three Tonga companies, two Yao and one Rimba, and it was hoped that before long the Regiment would be able to dispense with the services of the Sikhs.

In December 1898 the existing troops of the Central Africa Rifles were designated the 1st Battalion and on 1st January 1899 the 2nd Battalion was formed from Yao, Nguru, Tonga and Rimba recruits.[4] While 1CAR became involved in the pacification of the Ngoni, a people whose military qualities were noted, 2CAR went abroad to Mauritius and then to Somaliland. There they replaced a force from the Indian Army and became the first Africans to serve abroad in that territory. Alongside local levies of Somalis they took part in the campaign against the 'Mad Mullah'. This was the beginning of the traditional mix of Somalis and Nyasas in the KAR. It established the custom too, of Nyasaland keeping two battalions, one to serve at home and one abroad. In discussions on future requirements it was decided that both battalions should be obliged to serve abroad and should relieve one another periodically. When the British acquired

the mandate of Tanganyika in 1921, the tradition began of one of the Nyasaland battalions serving in that territory. Nyasaland was also building up its traditions regarding the peoples it recruited its soldiers from. By 1901 the Yao were quickly becoming the most frequently recruited group, followed by the Tonga.

In 1902 the first battalion of the King's African Rifles was formed. The eight companies of 1CAR became 1KAR and the six companies of 2CAR became 2KAR. Much of the fighting ethos of the Nyasas was based on their being members of the first battalions of the KAR, the most experienced group in the Regiment.

The third battalion of the KAR was formerly the East African Regiment. Its origins can be traced to the need for a military force to protect the interests of the Imperial British East Africa Company in the area between Lake Victoria and the coast. The company was formed in 1888 from the British East African Association, which was granted the right to administer areas covered by treaties of protection. The Company was based at Mombasa on the coast but it had various outposts including one at Machako's, 250 miles inland. It had a reluctant commitment if not an active interest in safeguarding lines of communication and developing a safe route from Buganda to the coast through hostile territory. At first the River Tana seemed a likely route but it was discovered to be unhealthy and the Company opted for the direct route across the arid Taru Desert.

Developments in Buganda itself overshadowed those in the

area which was to become the Protectorate of British East Africa. The latter was important as a region to be travelled through on the way to Lake Victoria rather than for its own sake. It was much later that the fertility and climate of Kikuyuland was widely recognised as suitable and desirable for European farmers. The British Prime Minister, Lord Salisbury, urged Parliament to finance the building of a railway which would link the interior to the coast.

To the British East Africa Company, Buganda sometimes seemed more trouble than it was worth and the task of controlling political developments there was impossible from the Company base at Mombasa. The Company therefore contemplated withdrawing from Buganda altogether, but was restrained from doing so because the only commodity from the interior on which a profit could be made was ivory from Toro, Bunyoro and the Upper Congo and the route to these areas passed through Buganda. The Company was thus a trading enterprise which became unintentionally involved in political and administrative commitments beyond its financial capacity. The Company Chairman, Sir William MacKinnon, saw the need for an organised military force to protect his Company's interests but was unable to finance a centrally controlled army. Instead, a miscellaneous selection of soldiers was employed including mercenaries belonging to the Sultan of Zanzibar. MacKinnon considered the use of troops from Sierra Leone and Zululand but dismissed the scheme as costly and impractical. He then turned to India and received permission to recruit in the Delhi neighbourhood where he raised a police force to help garrison some of the Company's out-

posts. The Company also sought the assistance of British naval patrols in areas which were reasonably accessible from the coast.

In Britain, Liberal opinion thought it was beyond Britain's brief to interfere in the suppression of East Africa's slave trade as East Africa had only been claimed as a British 'sphere of influence' to prevent the intervention of other European powers. However, there were those in Great Britain who wanted more the positive acquisition of African land for its own sake and to counter German advances into the interior. As in Nyasaland there were those who took an altruistic interest in the suppression of the slave trade and who considered British naval patrols on the East coast were inadequate. A land force was needed as well.

Lieutenant Lloyd Mathews R.N., serving in one such anti-slavery patrol, took the initiative and raised 300 Zanzibaris to combat the slavers[5]. In 1878 he became Brigadier General in charge of a new army under the Sultan of Zanzibar. Gradually his force expanded and was reorganised under the command of Captain G.P. Hatch when Mathews became First Minister to the Sultan of Zanzibar.

In 1893 Sir Gerald Portal was sent to inquire into the commercial viability of the Imperial British East Africa Company's activities in Buganda and the current political situation there. To escort him on his journey into the interior he took a group of Hatch's Zanzibaris. They led him through Kamba and Kikuyu territory, the prairies of the Masai and northern Kavirondo. Originally Portal had

admired Hatch's work in disciplining and organising the Zanzibaris but he soon changed his mind and replaced them with Sudanese, recruited by Captain Lugard, when he reached Uganda. The Sudanese remained very popular as soldiers throughout the history of the KAR. Portal also expressed his horror at the defence arrangements for the Company's up-country stations where troops were enlisted on an ad hoc basis, if at all. At a Company base at Machako's in March 1894, the Company representative, John Ainsworth gained Company permission to raise Kamba to protect his activities from the Kikuyu and Masai. The Kamba were to dominate the ranks of the KAR's Northern Brigade in future years.

The following year the Company surrendered its rights, finding the extent of its obligations too vast. The British government then took over the Protectorate of Buganda and in due course extended the Protectorate to cover all the East African territory from Buganda westward, northward and eastward to the coast. This was done in most instances without any formal agreement between Britain and the people of the region which was now the Protectorate of British East Africa because there was no African political structure formal enough to provide chiefs with whom negotiations could be conducted. It was also deemed a matter of urgency that Britain should assume responsibility for the territory which linked the Lake Victoria region to the coast to ensure a link with areas of strategic interest in the interior.

At the time of the establishment of the Protectorate, the

British East Africa Company's troops numbered 866 of which 255 were Sudanese[6]. Arthur Hardinge, the new Commissioner of the Protectorate, formed these into a single unit with Hatch as Commandant, to be known as the East African Rifles. Their HQ was at Mombasa. During the reorganisation the Indian troops were dispensed with but the Sudanese remained. Hardinge was keen to recruit more Sudanese but the Khedive of Egypt objected to his subjects giving their allegiance to a foreign power in such numbers.

Following the successful use of the Aden Camel Corps in punitive expeditions in Jubaland in 1901, the East African Rifles acquired its own Camel Company, able to travel 50 miles a day without water. In 1902 the Camel Company and seven infantry companies of the East African Rifles became the Third Battalion of the KAR.

The Fourth and Fifth Battalions of the KAR were formerly the African and Indian battalions of the Uganda Rifles. This Regiment's history begins with the expedition of Captain F.D. Lugard to the Kingdom of Buganda in 1890.

Lugard left Mombasa in August of that year with seventy Sudanese soldiers recruited in Egypt by Captain W.H. Williams, to serve the British East Africa Company. On arrival in Buganda in December 1890, Lugard had 50 men left, armed with rifles and a single maxim gun with eleven rounds of ammunition[7]. To add to the insecurity of his position, Lugard had poor lines of communication with Mombasa and lacked specific directives from the British East Africa Company. The Kingdom of Buganda was in an unstable state

at that time and the restoration of the recently-exiled Mwanga as Kabaka only served to exacerbate the situation. During this period in power up to 1888, Mwanga had harshly persecuted Chritian and Moslèm alike. A rebellion against him in 1888 caused him to flee the country and in his absence, first a Moslem, then a pagan faction became dominant. Following the murder of his younger brother and successor as Kabaka, Mwanga turned to the French Roman Catholic missionaries stationed at Bukumbi. The French White Fathers believed that the restoration of Mwanga would bring stability to Buganda and along with the more hesitant Anglicans, pledged him their support. On his restoration Roman Catholics gained considerable influence in Buganda, but the Anglicans remained resentful. The Moslems, too, were looking for an opportunity to return to power and mutual fear of the Moslems, who had taken refuge in Bunyoro, was one factor which kept the increasing friction between the two Christian missions under control.

Lugard's position at Mwanga's capital was uncertain. At one stage during his exile, Mwanga had made contact with a British East African Company expedition to Kavirondo, led by F.J. Jackson and Ernest Gedge[8]. By the time Jackson was aware of Mwanga's plea for help in his restoration, it had already been accomplished. Under an obligation to the French Fathers, Mwanga complied with their request to sign an agreement with Lugard. The treaty was very fragile and meanwhile, the Moslems were preparing an attack on Buganda from Bunyoro. Lugard realised he needed a force of his own to establish order and give him status and recognition in Buganda. Without military backing he was powerless to establish a safe trade route through Mwanga's territory, for the ivory from Toro,

Bunyoro and the Upper Congo.

On 31st January 1891, Lugard received reinforcements of 75 Sudanese soldiers and 100 Swahili porters under the command of Captain Williams. This gave him the temporary respite he needed to recruit more troops. Lugard's first move was to rally the Christians of Buganda against their common enemy, the Moslems, and their ally, Kabarega of Bunyoro. The consequent defeat of the Moslems freed Williams to man the fort at Kampala in Buganda while Lugard went West in search of an independent military force.

After the rebellion of the Mahdi, Egyptian power in the Southern Sudan declined. Its only vestiges were the positions held by Emin Pasha, Egypt's representative in her one-time Equatorial Province. An expedition under the explorer and journalist, Henry Stanley, had gone to relieve Emin Pasha who was clinging precariously to his position on the Albert Nile. Abandoned by the Khedive, Emin Pasha, after accompanying Stanley to the east coast, took service with the Germans who were beginning to take an interest in the region. Some of his troops also went with Stanley to the coast. It was Emin's Sudanese troops who had not joined Stanley but had stayed behind at Kavalli's, near Lake Albert, that Lugard hoped to recruit into the service of the British East Africa Company. They had the reputation of being the finest soldiers in Africa and they were to become the founder members of a Regiment which rated highly the belief in the warrior traditions of its members.

Lugard met Selim Bey[9], the leader of the Sudanese, at Kavalli's.

Initially Selim Bey protested that his men could not serve Lugard without the consent of the Khedive of Egypt, but until that consent arrived Selim Bey agreed to ally himself with Lugard. As in later years, the Sudanese only paid lip-service to their status as subjects of the Khedive. They were not reluctant to give their allegiance elsewhere and were to become renowned for their loyalty to the King's African Rifles.

Although Emin Pasha's troops had earned themselves a reputation as good soldiers, the Sudanese at Kavalli's were disorganised and encumbered with families and possessions. Lugard visualised an efficiently run force of some 500 men to accomplish his aims in Buganda. He left Kavalli's with an entourage of nearly 9,000 men, women and children.

As Lugard returned south he stationed the Sudanese in new forts along the route. In doing this he aimed to protect the Kingdom of Toro from the menace of Kabarega of Bunyoro. Lugard had backed the restoration of Kasagama to the throne of Toro with the dual purpose of thwarting Kabarega's ambitions in that area and advancing those of the British East Africa Company. Though the Sudanese proceeded to create their own troubles for Toro, Lugard had succeeded in opening up a safe trade route to the West. He had also armed himself with the personal means to impose civil order in Uganda even if the aims of the Company remained nebulous. On his return he was able to put a stop to the faction fighting, to ally himself with the Protestants and to persuade Mwanga to sign an agreement dividing the administration

of Buganda between the Protestants and Catholics. The Moslems were also temporarily pacified and Lugard felt safe to leave for England. Although there were criticisms of Lugard's political methods and the behaviour of his troops, he had provided the nucleus from which a proper armed force could be expanded to serve British interests in Buganda and the surrounding areas. When Portal, the British Commissioner appointed to inquire into events in Buganda, arrived there in 1893, he was able to enlist some of Lugard's Sudanese directly into British service. Those who remained unenlisted were in an anomalous position and so was their leader Selim Bey, whom the British suspected of conspiring with the Moslems. When civil war did break out again in Buganda in 1897, the Sudanese did not side with the Moslems and the treatment of Selim Bey seemed somewhat harsh in retrospect. The Moslems were once more defeated and the Sudanese forces were reorganised to include those from the forts established by Lugard, men who had previously been unenlisted.

In 1893 the British East Africa Company was preparing to withdraw from Buganda because it was unable to find sufficient financial incentives to enable its presence to continue. Following Portal's recommendations, the British government planned to proclaim a Protectorate over Buganda and its provinces to counter Arab ambitions in the African interior. Before the Protectorate was announced, a series of wars during the period 1893 to 1895 led to the extension of Buganda's original boundaries. In June 1894 a formal Protectorate was declared over Buganda and this was extended

to include Bunyoro in June 1896. On 1st September 1895 Uganda's Sudanese soldiers were organised into a Regiment of 17 companies to be known as the 'Uganda Rifles'[10]. This was the first attempt to formalise the troops of the new Protectorate.

The future of the 'Uganda Rifles' was not to be without its troubles, not least the Uganda mutiny of 1897. After the mutiny began the tradition of mixing the tribes within the battalions; a custom which was to continue in 4KAR and 5KAR, the Uganda Rifles' successors in the King's African Rifles. The idea was to prevent any one group becoming too dominant as the Sudanese had become in Uganda's military forces during the 1890s. After 1897 the authorities enlisted an Indian contingent and also extended their recruitment of local peoples, who were thought to be particularly suitable for soldiering. The Uganda Rifles was the largest of the KAR's original Regiments although it served a smaller area than the East African Regiment. However, it had to deal with incessant internal strife and the territory's problems did not cease with the establishment of the British Protectorate. The Uganda Rifles' domestic commitments meant that, unlike the Central African Regiment and the East African Regiment, it was not called upon to serve abroad.

In 1902, when the KAR was formed, the Uganda Rifles' nine companies of Africans became 4KAR and its four companies of Indians became 5KAR. Centralised control of military forces in East Africa came about in 1902 following a similar move in West Africa. In 1901 West African forces from the

various territories were merged into the Royal West Africa Frontier Force (RWAFF). A summary of the five battalions of the new King's African Rifles is as follows:

1KAR	formerly	1CAR
2KAR	formerly	2CAR
3KAR	formerly	3EAR
4KAR	formerly	the African Uganda Rifles
5KAR	formerly	the Indian Uganda Rifles

There were also plans to form a Sixth Somaliland battalion from the three infantry companies, Camel Corps, militia and mounted infantry of the local forces in British Somaliland but these plans were postponed.

It was intended that financial support for the new Regiment should come from the countries it served but in the event Britain had to make extra money available. The KAR expanded during the first decade of the twentieth century. Lieutenant W.H. Manning produced the first Inspector General's report on the KAR in 1902. He noted the enthusiasm of the Yao and Ntonga in Central Africa and the high rate of re-engagement of NCOs from Nyasaland. Many began to replace Sikhs as drill officers. An experiment to recruit Ngoni in 1903 was successful and training of signallers also began in that year. The large number of Sudanese in 3KAR were gradually replaced by Kenyan Africans, including a controversial Masai Company which had to be disbanded in 1907.

Despite the popularity of the KAR, it was largely unprepared for the event of war. In 1911 2KAR had to be disbanded in

the interests of economy and the establishment of the Regiment reached a record low point. In 1912 the remaining Indian contingents were withdrawn from East Africa and steps were taken to increase the recruitment of Africans to cover this loss. By 1913 the policy of cutting back the Regiment was reversed and the Nyasaland forces were once more strengthened.

During the First World War, the KAR came under the control of the War Office and was expanded. A Signal Company and nineteen new infantry battalions were formed. This included the formation of 6KAR, not from Somaliland troops but from Tanganyikan Africans after the lengthy and hard-fought East African campaign had resulted in the defeat of the Germans in East Africa. In 1917 at Morogoro in former German East Africa, the KAR began to recruit men who had once been subjects of their enemy. The Sixth Battalion was formed partly from recruits originally intended for extra battalions of 3KAR and partly from experienced ex-enemy askaris in the prisoner of war camps. This explains how some Tanganyikan Africans were able to have fought in both World Wars, in the first for the Germans and in the second for the British.

When the First World War was over, further reorganisation of the KAR took place. Responsibility for the Regiment was once more transferred to the Colonial Office and the War Office relinquished its war-time control of the Empire's forces. Garrisons were retained in the newly conquered Tanganyika Territory which became a British mandate after the Treaty of Versailles in 1919. The KAR continued to have an internal role subduing tribal unrest in Kenya's Northern

Frontier District and in British Somaliland. Economies and reductions were made but after demobilisation the KAR still had six battalions with a total of 25 infantry companies. Financial stringency in the 1920s prevented such an establishment being maintained and further reductions had to be made in the interests of economy. In Kenya there were few tasks of a military nature to be undertaken apart from the troublesome Northern Frontier District which required further fortification after the cession of Jubaland to the Italians in 1925[11]. Tanganyika proved surprisingly quiet, and fortunately for the British, less troops were needed to hold the former German territory than had been anticipated. Tanganyika was divided into two areas for military administration; 6KAR, the locally raised battalion, was given responsibility for the coastal district, and the two Nyasaland battalions took alternating service in the interior. In 1923 the KAR was relieved of its commitments in Zanzibar, where troops from 3KAR and 5KAR had been stationed, and the Zanzibar police force assumed control of the island's military matters. In Nyasaland, the KAR flourished in the 1920s. Annual marches and field exercises were a regular feature and roused the enthusiasm of the local people in the many areas visited. This tradition was to be revived in a new form during the latter years of the Second World War, as an aid to recruitment.

Uganda too, remained comparatively peaceful in the 1920s. As in Kenya, troops were stationed by platoons in different parts of the country.

By 1928 a KAR reserve of officers (KARRO) had been formed in all territories and the Somaliland Camel Corps had been brought under the jurisdiction of the Inspector General of the KAR. A year later a complete reorganisation of the KAR took place to try to lessen the impact of severe financial cutbacks caused by the economic disaster which first hit America, then Britain and then her colonies. The KAR was divided into two brigades: a Northern Brigade to be based in Nairobi and a Southern Brigade to be based in Dar es Salaam. Each brigade had three battalions and a Signals Section. A Supply and Transport Corps was also created. The Northern Brigade consisted of 3KAR, 4KAR and 5KAR and the Southern of 1KAR, 2KAR and 6KAR.

In September 1931 the establishments of the battalions were reduced and by 1933 the Regiment had a total of 2,400 men[12]. This was the state of affairs as war became increasingly likely in the late 1930s. In 1936 the Italians invaded Abyssinia with Hitler's approval and threatened to create an empire between Kenya, the Sudan and British Somaliland. British East Africa was in a potentially precarious situation. Cuts in civil administration within East Africa meant that the KAR had to assist the police in their role. From 1936 their task was made increasingly difficult because of the influx of bandits and refugees crossing the border into Kenya from Abyssinia. Locust control, famine relief and roadmaking were among the peace-time tasks of the battalions of the Southern Brigade. While coping with internal matters, the KAR's resources had to stretch to meet a potential Italian invasion and 1KAR was moved to British Somaliland to support

the Camel Corps if the need arose. It was apparent that the force would have to be expanded and in 1936 the East African forces came under review as part of the overall defence programme of the British Empire.

In the face of a potential external threat it became necessary to make the employment of KAR forces for internal security purposes a secondary concern. Tanganyika was excepted because of the presence of Germans with pro-Nazi sympathies. There were three main areas of priority; Kenya's Northern Frontier District, the coastline and Tanganyika. To begin with, these were the places where the authorities expected difficulties and troops were deployed accordingly.

The serious deficiencies of the KAR for anything other than normal internal security duties were pointed out by Major General G.J. Giffard who was appointed Inspector-General of African Forces in 1936. The Regiment was short of men and equipment. In addition, the part-time or territorial units were generally under-manned and in Nyasaland were non-existent. Although the KARRO had expanded in Kenya it had been reduced in Uganda. Apart from the Coast Defence Unit at Mombasa, there was no artillery. There was no airforce and no navy. Heavy Vickers guns were gradually being replaced by Bren guns, but financial limitations meant that the KAR was destined to remain primarily an infantry force. It would consist of African askaris under British leadership and mechanisation would be minimal. Men had fewer machines to fight with in Africa because it had always been thought that large resources of manpower would compensate for a lack of

sophisticated weaponry. In any case, at that stage few Africans were thought capable of handling complicated equipment or carrying out skilled tasks. The only specialised sections were the Signals, the Coast Defence Unit and the Supply and Transport Corps. Giffard's review of East African forces revealed these inadequacies and provided the basis for change and expansion.[13]

Giffard decided on two types of battalion; first-line battalions of full strength and cadre battalions with lower establishments which would serve as nuclei for expansion. The latter were to absorb and train reservists in the event of war. The initial role of the first-line battalions would be the defence of Kenya. As this task would involve the Uganda battalion, 4KAR, a further battalion was formed to safeguard the internal security of Uganda. This was 7KAR, a territorial battalion with headquarters at Bombo. A Coast Defence Rifle Company was also formed in 1938 from reservists and the Signals Sections were expanded.

By October 1939 nearly all Giffard's plans for the KAR had been put into effect and the Regiment's total strength had risken to 517 British officers, 1,020 British other ranks and 11,091 Africans[14]. In 1933 the total strength of the Regiment had been 2,400 men including British and African ranks. In six years it had grown considerably in preparation for war. In the next six years it was to expand even more. In May 1945 there were 46,050 East African troops in Asia, 30,000 in the Middle East and 150,000 in the Home Command[15]. Between October 1939 and May 1945 the KAR increased its

manpower by nearly a quarter of a million. Such rapid and massive expansion had an effect on the African populations from which the askaris were recruited. The troops made a useful contribution to the Allied victory in the Second World War in various fields of conflict - in Abyssinia, North Africa and the Middle East, and in Madagascar and Burma. That contribution has subsequently been ignored or understated as has that of black troops from other parts of the British Empire, notably West Africa, the High Commission Territories and the West Indies. At the time, their role in the war effort was simply taken for granted in Britain.

A Regiment whose origins were associated with the recruitment of a motley band of Sudanese to add authority to Lugard's activities in Buganda, grew in size and importance to fight outside the continent of Africa and to play a significant part in a World War.

CHAPTER ONE

THE FIRST PHASE OF RECRUITMENT 1939 TO 1941

In the months following the Munich settlement it became increasingly apparent that Hitler was not to be restrained by Western protests. Before appeasement was abandoned in the face of a Nazi threat to Poland, British forces had the chance to reorganize, expand, rearm and train. In East Africa the KAR had time to prepare to meet an Italian invasion from Abyssinia in the event of Mussolini joining in the war on the side of Hitler. The British government had displayed little interest in the East African territories during the 1930s and had accepted the Italian conquest of Abyssinia in the Hoare-Laval pact of 1936. Chamberlain's appeasement policy had gone to such lengths that colonials in East Africa even feared that Tanganyika might be returned to Germany, as Hitler demanded. On the abandonment of these policies in September 1939, the British colonies were now expected to make a full contribution to the Empire's war effort.

Their precise role was not indicated. The government in Whitehall and the military authorities in the War Office, hesitated to define their demands because long term strategies could only be determined as the war progressed. A loosely-stated policy had the advantage of being easily reversed and less vulnerable to criticism. Moreover, the political activities of the Congress Party in India were an irritation which, it was feared, might well spread to Africa, so the British government preferred to tread cautiously. East Africa

had its own Indian population particularly in Kenya and Tanganyika. Although relations between the Indian and indigenous communities were not altogether harmonious, there was the possibility that Indians might become infected with anti British beliefs and pass these on to Africans. Gandhi's Satyagraha was well publicised in Tanganyika in the Tanganyika Herald. Critics of the British Empire might also criticise the use of African troops to fight a war for freedom and self determination when no concessions were being made to African participation in government. It was safer therefore, for the British to pursue a vague policy regarding the use of African manpower, for the time being.

In 1939 there were three areas where African efforts were needed; in the armed forces, in producing food on their own farms and as a labour force. The labour force was required to work the European owned farms, estates and plantations and by the military authorities to do vital back-up work for the troops.

In Kenya the situation was especially controversial. The Governor of Kenya urged that Kenya's part in the Imperial war effort should be one of food production. His request reflected the viewpoint of the white farmer settlers who were well represented in Kenya's Legislative Council. Farming remained the prime commitment of many whose forebears had been pioneer settlers. Although white Kenyans felt some affinity with Britain many were reluctant to leave their farms to fight a war in Europe. It was considered dangerous to leave wives in charge of farms. In the remoter districts

the police force was inadequate and Europeans took the law into their own hands to try and curb the criminal tendencies of the local population. On some farms it was thought women might have difficulties in getting sufficient work out of the labour force. The Kenyan settler farmers also feared that all their best workers might enlist in the armed forces. Their most important consideration, however, was an economic one. If Kenya were selected to provide food for the war effort, they would have access to a world market and would be able to export their produce profitably.

On April 14th 1939, the Goveror of Kenya spoke to the Legislative Council;

'Wars are won, not only by using a rifle in the firing line but by keeping up the supply of food and material.'[1]

Military requirements would have a detrimental effect on the productive capacity of the colony especially if the best agricultural officers went into the army. When war approached in 1939 the Kenyan farmers were left to wait and see what emphasis would be placed on the military recruitment of both European and African manpower in the colony. In the other East African territories, general rather than specific instructions were given regarding the full contribution to be made to the Empire's war effort. In response, military authorities welcomed volunteers into the KAR and civil authorities encouraged African war gifts. A spontaneous gesture came from the Chagga tribe of Moshi, Tanganyika, who offered a proportion of their harvest to the war effort. It was their custom for those at home to send food to warriors and their

contribution was duly distributed among the African ranks of the KAR at Moshi.[2]

During the 1930s British policies towards East Africa had sometimes been vague, indecisive and indifferent. A variety of civil and military authorities affected East Africa. The main civil authorities comprised the Colonial Office, the Governors of the East African territories and their Provincial and District administrators. The hierarchy of military authorities comprised the Army Council, the War Office, Middle East Comman, GOCEA - (General Officer Commanding East African Forces) and other military officers within East Africa itself. In 1939 it was necessary to clarify the responsibilities of these individuals and bodies and to delegate emergency powers. A complicated but apparently effective decision-making process evolved.

In September 1939, control of British forces in East Africa was transferred from the Colonial Office to the War Office. In future any amendments to the Field Service Manual, African Forces,[3] had to be endorsed by both the Army Council and the Secretary of State for the Colonies so that although the War Office had overall control, it still had to consult with the civil authority before passing new legislation affecting African forces. The Secretary of State for the Colonies also had the right to sanction or refuse financial demands from the colonies. This was despite the official War Office financial responsibility for military expenditure to cover the pay and allowances of personnel and capital expenditure on accommodation and military works. The East African civil

governments were to pay pensions and gratuities, cover the cost of their own naval and civil defence and make a contribution to His Majesty's Government's defence budget.[4]

The Governors of the East African territories were granted the power to recruit Africans and form new units because the needs of the military situation were more readily understood by the men on the spot. Officials in Westminster had more pressing needs to attend to. The Governors might delegate their recruiting powers as they saw fit. Thus the major policy decisions were made in London but their detailed implementation was left to the authorities in Africa.

Requests and suggestions made by the Governors and the KAR to the British government were usually approved, though often with the proviso that the East African governments must meet a proportion of the costs themselves. For example, in September 1939 the Secretary of State for the Colonies gave his approval to the request of the Governor of Kenya to bring 3KAR up to full strength but sanctioned a treasury advance to cover costs of mobilisation only.[5] Recurrent costs had to come from the Kenyan budget. All such requests were referred to the Secretary of State for the Colonies via the Army Council, and because of the power of the Governors to delegate,the requests originated from the military authority, GOCEA.

Later in the war when the KAR was expanding more rapidly a Military Units Ordinance (1942) gave further details of the Governors' responsibilities. He was to have control over any units established or present within his territory

and was to determine pay, allowances, rations, terms of service, gratuities, the appointment and promotion of officers and the suspension of members from units. He also had the right of delegation of these powers.[6]

Despite the co-ordinating role of the Governor of Kenya, through whom all requests were framed from the outset of the war, negotiations were lengthy and the Secretary of State for the Colonies was often tardy in replying. Thus the GOCEA was forced at times to act before an official reply had been received, on the assumption that London would comply, as it usually did. Provided the colonies caused no problems, did not cost too much and helped to win the war, Britain was content not to be involved in the intricacies of the recruitment of East Africans to the KAR.

There were three major phases of recruitment in East Africa during the Second World War. Each phase was designed to meet specific needs. The initial recruiting period in East Africa, from 1939 to 1941, was for the defence of Kenya and the East African campaign. During this phase the most rapid expansion took place in 1940.

In June 1939, while the British were unsuccessfully attempting to negotiate an Anglo-Soviet alliance to defend Poland, the East African Governors' conference met at Dar es Salaam. Permission was given, by the Governors, for Giffard's defence plans, first submitted in 1936 and first implemented in 1938, to continue to go ahead. It was decided that, on the outbreak of war, the Northern Brigade of the KAR should become the

1st East African infantry Brigade and the Southern Brigade should become the 2nd East African infantry Brigade, ready to mobilise within a month of the outbreak of war. It was agreed that there should be cross-posting of battalions within the brigades and that a central headquarters for East African forces should be established. It was noted that the battalions which Giffard had designated first line battalions, were already up to strength and that the commander of the Southern Brigade had completed the arrangements to form two new battalions; 2/2KAR and 2/6KAR, 2KAR and 6KAR having been designated as cadre battalions based at Zomba and Dar es Salaam respectively. The reserve battalions, at this stage, were under strength. However, two new units had been formed; the territorial Uganda battalion, 7KAR, for Uganda's internal security if 4KAR were needed in Kenya's Northern Frontier District and the Coast Defence Rifle Company.

The War Establishment of a KAR Rifle Battalion was as follows:[7]

	EUROPEANS			AFRICAN TROOPS				CARRIERS			NON COMBATANTS				
DETAIL	Officers	Br. W. & N.C.Os	TOTAL	Sergeant Majors	Sergeants	Rank and File	TOTAL	Headmen	Carriers	TOTAL	Motor Drivers	Clerks	Tailors	Shoemakers and Armourers	TOTAL
HQ Company	12	17	29	1	6	125	132	3	52	55	-	2	1	2	5
HQ Company (attached)	1	1	2	-	2	6	8	-	-	-	42	1	-	-	1
Four rifle companies	24	24	48	4	16	432	452	4	160	164	-	-	-	-	-
TOTAL RIFLE BATTALION	36	41	77	5	22	557	584	7	212	219	-	2	1	2	5
TOTAL RIFLE BATTALION (including Attached)	37	42	79	5	24	563	592	7	212	219	42	3	1	2	6
BATTALION HQ															
Lieutentant Colonel	1		1												
Major (2 i/c)	1		1												
Adjutant	1		1												
Intelligence Officer	1		1												
QM	1		1												

Having set up a war time decision-making process and have reorganised the KAR in good time, the Regiment was well prepared for the first major military exercise of the war, to round up and intern the 3,205 Germans, resident in Tanganyika, 1,858 of whom were male.[8] In 1931 there had been only 400 German farmers in Tanganyika and the more recent arrivals were a serious threat to the British Governor and his administration. Nazi propaganda had encouraged German settlement in Africa and General Ritter von Epp, Chief of the German Colonial League, explained that other countries would have to sacrifice a share of their own Empires so that Germany could receive a larger colonial domain.[9] A series of films was being shown in Germany during May 1939, entitled German Land in Africa. These demands made Britain more anxious to guard Tanganyika which was an important link between Britain's dependencies in north-eastern and in central and southern Africa, and because of its sisal and cotton resources. British settlers need no longer fear abandonment, as they had done in the 1930s. War with Germany increased the significance of Tanganyika to Britain.

Air raid practices took place in Dar es Salaam and 'black out' arrangements were made in April and August 1939. These preparations and the recall of all officers of 2KAR from leave in August 1939, suggest that war was a real and immediate threat to Tanganyika. At the same time the KAR had to deal with civil disorder at Tanga, which had been a permanent military station since April 1938. In August 1939 two KAR platoons were called in to deal with a labour strike and looting in the native quarters. The infantry fired to

disperse the crowd and a further company of soldiers moved from Moshi to Tanga.[10] With a substantial German population, some of whom belonged to the extremist German Colonial League, the escalation of civil disorder was not unlikely. It was essential that the King's African Rifles should be prepared.

On August 22nd all units were notified to 'stand by'. On August 26th they were mobilised. On September 3rd the 'War with Germany' telegram was received and the arrests of Tanganyika's aliens began.[11] The other East African territories had a longer breathing space. Such an extensive internal operation had never previously been undertaken by the KAR and Tanganyika was the largest of the territories it served. Only 14 Germans escaped arrest and the rest were escorted to Dar es Salaam to be interned. Headquarters and 'A' Company of 2KAR were based in Mbeya province for the operation and 'D' Company of 6KAR in Iringa province. The plan was carried out swiftly and successfully and was aided by the non-resistance of the Germans who foresaw a speedy Nazi victory and had therefore been advised by their leaders to co-operate. Within a week of the outbreak of war there was no further threat of disturbance from within Tanganyika. The efficiency of the internment programme was thought to have impressed the African population, many of whom expected an imminent re-occupation of the Territory by the Germans. This strengthened morale in Tanganyika and the KAR was now free to concentrate on the defence of East Africa. By this stage, the small number of aliens in the other territories had also been rounded up and interned.

The use of East African troops outside East Africa had been discussed but no decisions regarding the future role of the KAR had been reached. However, provision was made for troops to serve outside their own country but within East Africa, as had already been the practice of the two Nyasaland Battalions which served alternately in Tanganyika.

The Northern Brigade took up positions in the Northern Frontier District of Kenya. The two First Line battalions to be used were 4KAR, less 'A' Company in Turkana, and 5KAR. The third battalion remained in reserve in Nairobi, training and recruiting to the full strength of a 'First Line' battalion. The Southern Brigade was able to leave Tanganyika and undertook training at Namanga in October before going to Nanyuki to guard the western section of Kenya's N.F.D. So far the posting of units went smoothly and the speed and sequence of events did not disrupt the expansion of the KAR.

East Africa, like Europe, had its own 'phoney war' after the initial panic to maintain order in Tanganyika was over. While French troops patrolled the Maginotline, waiting for something to happen, Africans patrolled the Kenyan border with Italian East Africa, waiting to see what the Italians would do next. Italian neutrality made it possible for the KAR to have a breathing space and to embark on an intensive training programme. The Regiment also had valuable time in which to speed up its recruitment of infantry and to expand its barely adequate ancillary services and mechanised units.

The 1st East African Light Battery was formed on 21st September 1939, shortly after the arrival of the 22nd Mountain Battery from India. This was the first mobile artillery unit to be raised in East Africa and was placed under the command of Major W.W. Mackinlay R.A. at Mbagathi. The unit consisted of 38 British N.C.Os from the Kenya Regiment, a section of Africans from the Coast Defence Battery (the only unit previously to use artillery) and a section each from 1KAR and 2KAR. The Light Battery trained with the 22nd Mountain Battery from India on 3.7 inch howitzers.

The East African Reconnaissance Squadron[12] was also formed in 1939 and as there were no armoured cars, the unit operated with Ford one ton pick-up trucks with open backs and a machine gun in the cab. The Squadron was divided into three sections, each of which had just two trucks. Improvisation characterised East African units at this stage when severe shortages of equipment existed.

Other ancillary units legalised by military ordinance during the later months of 1939 comprised; the 1st Field Survey Company of East African Engineers, 1st Field Company of East African Engineers, the East Africa Army Service Corps, the East Africa Medical Corps, the East Africa Pay Corps, a Military Audit Unit, the 1st Donkey Company of East African Pack Transport Corps, the 1st Battalion East African Pioneers and the 2nd Battalion East African Pioneers.[13] The Pioneers were recruited to maintain and improve the unmetalled roads of the forward area.

In November 1939, with the agreement of the Governor of Kenya, it was decided to reorganise 3KAR as a machine gun battalion by withdrawing the machine gun platoons from the other battalions. They were armed with Bren guns which replaced the heavier Vickers guns.

Alongside the rapid development of the mechanised and auxiliary units, the infantry expanded and reorganised. In October 1939, plans were laid for the creation of a Colonial Division by Brigadier D.P. Dickinson, Inspector General of the KAR. It was envisaged that the KAR and RWAFF would contribute units to the Division, a formation which would serve both within and outside the African continent. Those units selected as components of the Division were 1KAR, 4KAR, 5KAR and a machine gun company of 3KAR. Of these units, three had already been designated first line battalions by Giffard. In October 1939 the use of the Colonial Division was foreseen as being in Iraq, Iran, Aden, Somaliland and Abyssinia. The responsibility for the defence of Kenya would then devolve onto 1/6KAR, 2/6 KAR and 7KAR. If necessary, another brigade for the defence of Kenya would be made available from the RWAFF.

The Italians were thought to have nearly a quarter of a million men in Abyssinia in September 1939.[14] The KAR needed infantry to defend Kenya in the event of an Italian invasion. To prepare to meet this onslaught, methods of recruitment were used which had proved effective before the war. Because they continued to meet with success they were used throughout the first phase of recruitment from 1939 to 1941. Quotas

were allotted to individual areas or to particular tribes and notification of a recruiting safari was sent to the chiefs, via the District Commissioners. A centre was chosen where the chiefs were expected to send those men they thought suitable for army life. The recruiting safari 'team' usually included a white recruiting officer and sergeant and often an African N.C.O. from the area where recruitment was to take place. Sometimes civil officials took honorary military rank for the duration of the recruiting campaign and searched the remoter districts for potential recruits. On one safari in Nyasaland, in 1940, the local commissioner of police lent four African sergeants, who had previously served as N.C.Os in the KAR, to help with recruiting.[15] A medical officer or doctor usually accompanied a safari.

When the would-be soldiers came into the base they were medically examined and given a simple physical fitness test such as running or jumping over a fence. Keen eyesight and the ability to close one eye independently of the other were prerequisites for all recruits. Many Africans suffered from poor eyesight, possibly due to malnutrition, and a large proportion of recruits were rejected on these grounds alone. Those with sight defects could hardly make effective use of a rifle. Right forefingers (trigger fingers) were also checked but at least one eager recruit, in this case with a missing finger, slipped through the net and learned to fire his rifle with his middle finger instead.[16] Men aged 18 to 45 and over 5'8" in height were eligible, although shorter men were accepted from certain tribes, particularly

in Nyasaland. Good general physique was essential and unsuitable men were rejected after a preliminary examination, or at a later stage when they were more thoroughly tested. Evidence for this is found in the KAR War Diary for the Training Centre at Jinja from which the following extracts are taken:

16 July 1940	9 Nubi recruits arrived from Lira - 1 medically unfit.
20 July 1940	18 Nubi recruits arrived - 1 medically unfit.
25 July 1940	3 Wakamba and 13 Acholi discharged as medically unfit.
26 July 1940	23 Acholi arrived from Kitgum of whom 8 were medically unfit.
29 July 1940	26 recruits discharged as medically unfit.[17]

On a recruiting safari, shortly after the outbreak of war, to the Mount Elgon region in Uganda, enough Sebei volunteered for it to be possible to select only one in ten, after two medical examinations.[18] Though this was an indication of the extent to which the KAR could afford to pick and choose, many volunteers were turned down on health grounds. Major R.D. West of 4KAR recalled that some recruits had to be rejected because scar tissue on their feet meant that they could not wear boots.[19]

Although Major General Giffard's Report on the Northern Brigade at the end of 1938 praised the 'excellent physique' of the recruits, the actual health statistics were less promising. The Brigadier of the Northern Brigade reported;

Average daily strength	1528	
Average daily sick	35.24	
Number of deaths	12	(all due to Lobar pneumonia)
Admissions to hospital (including V.D.)	866	
V.D. Number of fresh cases	115	
V.D. Number of relapses	84	
V.D. Number of men affected	199	
Total number of days of duty lost through V.D.	1707	

Well might the Brigadier conclude that V.D. was the chief source of inefficiency.[20] Cases of the disease were not always obvious among new recruits but anyway it is more likely that they contracted it after leaving their homes and families to join the KAR. Venereal disease affected a significant proportion of the Northern Brigade during 1938 but so did other illnesses. Even allowing for the fact that individual men might have been admitted to hospital more than once in that year, an alarming 866 admissions were recorded, suggesting that perhaps half the Brigade needed hospital treatment at some time during 1938. If this was the state of health of those already in the Regiment, it was a poor reflection on those who had been discharged as medically unfit.

In addition to the traditional methods of recruitment, a variety of new ideas were put into effect. The recruiting authorities kept in close touch with African Secondary schools. Although the infantry required physical strength rather than academic qualifications, promising youngsters with some level

of literacy and numeracy were needed for skilled tasks. For example, Brigadier C.H. Stoneley[21] of the Northern Brigade's Signal Section kept in touch with the headmaster of the government school in Machakos and visited the school a few months before he needed a new batch of recruits. Stoneley was able to select the best candidates to attend his small Signal School in Nairobi, boys who were almost exclusively Kamba. Stoneley had a pool of twenty young trainees at any one time who were posted to signal detachments for field experience after their initial training at the school. Lieutenant Colonel H.P.L. Glass,[22] who served with 2KAR from 1937 to 1940, commented that the mission boys of above average intelligence tended to go into the Signals, mortar platoons or become drivers. Other educated Africans became clerks or joined the medical section.[23] The large number of askaris whose professed religion was Christianity suggests that many recruits had had contact with Christian mission schools. In the Southern Brigade, in October 1938, there were 702 professed Christians out of a total 1,195 combatant ranks.[24] In the Northern Brigade in December 1938, there were 942 professed Christians out of a total 1,673 combatant ranks. In the Signal Company of the Northern Brigade, 77 out of 85 Africans were Christians. The battalion with the greatest number of Christians was 4KAR[25] which recruited mainly in Uganda, where there were a large number of missions. Although there was a predominance of Christians in the infantry as well as the skilled branches of the KAR, they were not always preferred by the recruiting authorities, particularly if they were educated. In the KAR infantry,

pagans and Mohammedans were thought the best soldiers and Roman Catholics were thought easier to discipline than Protestants. However, recruiting large numbers of Christians into the infantry was unavoidable.

Recruits were also found among carriers or porters who had served in the First World War. Alexander D. Shireff, [26] one-time commander of 'B' Company, 5KAR, wrote of the Meru and Embu in his battalion who had C.A.R. numbers, indicating former service of that kind with the British in war time. A number of N.C.Os and constables from the Uganda police volunteered for service with the KAR in 1939 and were seconded to 4KAR for the duration of the war.[27] The Uganda police were an armed force and had received appropriate weapon training and parade work to make them suitable transfers to the armed forces.

Another acceptable 'back door' method of enlisting was open to Africans who had served as batmen or as second-line transport drivers with the East African Reconnaissance Squadron. When the Squadron became the East African Armoured Car Regiment in 1941, these servants and drivers were given the option of joining the infantry.[28]

In 1939 white Kenyans were requested to encourage their domestic servants and employees to listen to propaganda broadcasts in the Kikuyu, Kiswahili and Luo languages.[29] A tour by the KAR band in Tanganyika during April 1940 was also considered to have a positive effect on recruitment. The band toured Tanga, Moshi and Dar es Salaam and the

Commanding Officer of 2/6KAR agreed to arrange for the KAR band to play at any function the provincial authorities might choose. The Tanganyika Standard commented:

"It is considered the presence of the band will stimulate recruiting and be of great propaganda value amongst the native chiefs."[30]

One method of recruitment to the KAR had, traditionally, varied from the normal procedure. One of the most respected groups recruited to the KAR were the Nubi of Bombo, 30 miles north of Kampala in Uganda. These were the descendants of the so called 'founder members' of the KAR recruited by Captain F.D. Lugard in 1891. The procedure for enlisting the Nubi recalled their origin as former subjects of the Khedive of Egypt in the southern Sudan and gave them a special status among other askaris. The Nubi did not volunteer but they did not mind being press-ganged. In their settlements at Bombo and other large towns in Uganda, the Commanding Officer held a beer party where he provided drink, drumming and dancing for the local community. At about seven o'clock in the evening the older people and women quietly left while the young men continued to enjoy themselves. At midnight, at a given signal, they were surrounded by soldiers and 'persuaded' to enlist. In this way they were absolved from their loyalty to the Khedive.[31] The Nubi swore allegiance to the King just as their ancestors had sworn allegiance to Queen Victoria. They regarded themselves as having a type of mercenary status and therefore as being superior to the indigenous recruits.

The Nubi were looked upon as the backbone of the KAR before the Second World War. In return for their good service a settlement for retired Nubi was set up in Bombo in 1937 and ex-soldiers were given pensions and plots of land. In 1939 and 1940 they continued to form a substantial element in the Regiment, many of them serving as N.C.Os. Retired soldiers were recalled at the outbreak of war to assist in drilling and training the mass of raw recruits pouring into the recruiting centres at this time. When Major C.F. Broomfield joined 4KAR in 1941 he noticed many Nubi in the Battalion, including the Regimental Sergeant Major (RSM), several African Company Sergeant Majors (CSM), corporals and privates. The RSM, Mustapha Kamis, was much admired by Broomfield and his fellow officers who saw how he comfort-ed the askaris in their troubles and was an excellent discip-linarian.[32] It was often the case that British officers preferred the assistance of African N.C.Os to that of European N.C.Os who were sent out to nearly all the infantry platoons in 1939.

There were several Nubi on the KAR reserve in 1939 and one, Hassan Alijabu, who had been awarded the D.C.M. in 1921, was recalled as RSM to 5KAR. Another Nubi N.C.O., Sergeant George Mpabesi, became a battalion transport sergeant and in 1944 was mentioned in despatches for bravery after being ambushed by the Japanese in Burma.

Not all Nubi were admirable characters. Some were even prison inmates, released by being conscripted to 7KAR in 1940.[33] The Nubi CSM of 'C' Company 7KAR, Ramadan Mudari,

went absent without leave and was reduced to the ranks and publicly flogged. The notorious Idi Amin, later President of Uganda, whose mother was a Nubi, was also enlisted to the KAR in 1948 by Major Charles Broomfield.[34] On the whole, however, the Nubi proved extremely useful to the KAR and their status as semi-foreigners kept them apart from the men they helped to train and drill.

The initial response to these methods of recruiting and to the war effort in general was enthusiastic and in certain areas the momentum was maintained throughout the first phase of recruitment from 1939 to 1941. Sir Philip Mitchell, Governor of Uganda, wrote to Malcolm MacDonald, Secretary of State for the Colonies, in July 1939,

"The initial response to the appeal for recruits has been more than encouraging and no less than 800 volunteers came forward for the first 100 vacancies in the Kampala Company (7KAR)."[35]

This prompted Mitchell to raise a second company for the same battalion. In Tanganyika, the GOCEA claimed that thousands of first-rate African recruits could be produced,

"of the class used by Lettow von Worbeck in the last war."[36]

However, a telegram dated 20th June 1940 from the Governor of Tanganyika to Malcolm MacDonald expressed doubts as to whether recruits would continue to come forward:

"We could recruit good quality men up to 2,700 without difficulty and the present indications are that it would be unsafe to rely on any number greatly in excess of this unless methods of recruiting are to be radically altered."[37]

The Governor of Tanganyika was correct in forecasting the need for the new methods of recruitment which led to the expansion of 2/6KAR and 3/6KAR for service in South East Asia later in the war. He was also right in noting in the early stages of the war the initial enthusiasm for joining the KAR. A representative of the Tanganyika Standard visited the training depot for KAR recruits earlier in 1940 and reported:

"Before the war when 6KAR was at Dar es Salaam the intake of recruits was 60 a year, now it is 1,000 a year."[38]

The Tanganyika Herald published a telegram from Malcolm MacDonald concluding that there would be no difficulty in obtaining recruits and that there would be no need to release men from certain occupations so that they might join the army. It would be possible to maintain all public services so that the colonies could support and defend themselves.[39] MacDonald had reason to be optimistic and his view was confirmed by the constant flow of volunteers to the KAR.

The War Diaries of the KAR also provide supporting evidence that recruits flocked to join the KAR in 1939 and 1940. At the Jinja Infantry Training Centre in Uganda in June 1940 there were up to 1,434 African ranks on parade each

day. New recruits were constantly arriving while those who had completed their initial training were despatched to units.[40] The War Diary for the newly formed 7KAR shows an intake of 150 Africans in November 1939, to form 'C' Company and 310 Africans from the Nile areas in January 1940, to form 'B' and 'D' Companies. In August 1940 a recruiting safari set off to tour the Eastern Province and part of the Western Province of Uganda to recruit 1,000 men. These extracts are examples of what was a fairly common occurrence in the lives of the battalion's recruiting officers.

A Nyasaland battalion was recruited in 1940 at Namweras, a camp in the bush, 1,600 miles from the Kenya border. There the men came flocking in such numbers that it was only by over-crowding that they were got under cover. One teenage boy had walked 80 miles through lion infested country to enlist. Despite being below the minimum age he was accepted. On this occasion most of the recruits were youthful and at the end of October 1940 the battalion received a draft of 34, badly needed, experienced soldiers, from the Somaliland Camel Corps. From these older men a nucleus of N.C.Os was found to help train the new recruits.[41]

In Nyasaland the keen response to such safaris was encouraging in view of the alternative and equally remunerative form of employment which existed in the mines of the Rhodesias and South Africa. Colonel Fowkes, the Commanding Officer of the Southern Brigade, had predicted a less positive response to recruitment back in December 1938 when he wrote;

"Doubt has been expressed whether the martial tribes of Nyasaland will continue to come forward for enlistment. Though I do not believe the situation is yet really serious, well paid employment in the Rhodesias and South Africa does, without doubt, attract a number of young Nyasas who would otherwise satisfy their urge for adventure by enlisting into the King's African Rifles."[42]

His forecast, similar to that of the Governor of Tanganyika as regards immediate wartime recruiting in that territory, also proved incorrect and the KAR held its own against the rival claims of employment in the mines, at least until 1941.

As well as enthusiasm to join the KAR, some Africans demonstrated a willingness to aid the war effort in other ways. Generous contributions to the Red Cross were received in Tanganyika, especially from the Chagga Chiefs of the Kilimanjaro region, who had already shown their loyalty in donating food for the consumption of the KAR at Moshi. A Meru tribesman from Arusha presented approximately 50-lbs of tobacco for the use of KAR troops at Arusha. The Bena people of Ulanga, Tanganyika, gave 100 bags of rice weighing 10 tons to the KAR. African interest in the progress of the war was apparent and two new Swahili papers were set up to meet the demand for war news.[43]

Some Africans were intensely loyal and took their duties very seriously. The Chief Secretary of Uganda, addressing the Legislative Council, commended the spirit of 7KAR in

October 1939, and spoke of the compliant alacrity of one particular askari;

"All sorts of people are serving in the ranks who are in a state of society which might well have caused them to do otherwise ..... a Muganda gentleman who owns most of the land around Bombo is now serving in the ranks, and one of his first duties was to be put on a grass cutting fatigue, which he did willingly and which shows the spirit of the Regiment."[44]

The major requirement in 1939, 1940 and 1941 was for infantry and for this, traditional recruiting methods sufficed. The real difficulty was in finding enough African drivers, hence the frequent appeals in the newspapers for employers to release their African drivers for military service. Often, accidents occurred because of inexperienced drivers unused to travelling in a convoy system. In November 1940 the GOCEA laid plans for a Motor Transport Depot and driving school to turn out 750 drivers a month. Along with a stores depot, heavy repairs shop and light repairs section they formed the East African Army Service Corps which was formally approved by the War Office on 20th January 1941.[45] Such an institution solved the problem of a lack of trained drivers for the KAR.

The eagerness of many Africans to join the KAR in 1939, 1940 and 1941 is not surprising. There were certainly material advantages in doing so. The most obvious was that an askari was guaranteed at least one substantial meal a

day and a diet which included meat. A typical day's menu consisted of a mug of tea and a slice of bread at reveille (tea during war time included milk and sugar, whereas peace-time rations were solely of tea); a mid-day meal of meat with rice and beans and an evening meal of 'posho' (maize porridge) and vegetables. When the askaris were in camp, rations of tea, sugar, meat, vegetables and flour were issued but varied according to the locality. In Tanganyika war time rations for troops included meal, rice, groundnuts or dried peas, pitted dates, ghee, sugar, salt, meat, chilli peppers, rice, guinea cornflour, maize flour, vegetables, sweet potatoes, tea, tobacco and soap.[46] Meals were cooked by the wives who often accompanied their husbands and lived in the 'lines'. Each man was entitled to keep a maximum of one wife and three children in the camp. Sometimes askaris would go home on leave and return with a different wife. On active service or during training exercises askaris had to live on 'hard tack', but usually a hot meal was provided in the evening by the cook.

Rates of pay were good compared with manual labour and domestic service wages within East Africa. In June 1940 monthly rates of pay in the KAR were;

RSM	120 shillings
CSM	90 shillings
Sergeant	64 shillings
Corporal	48 shillings
Lance Corporal	40 shillings
Private (askari)	28 shillings
Recruit (askari)	20 shillings

In comparison, agricultural wages in 1935 varied from 10 shillings to 15 shillings a month. Even allowing for inflation over the five year period, agricultural labourers were still poorly paid in 1940 in relation to what men could earn in the KAR. Average domestic wages in Uganda in 1935 were as follows;

Head boy	35 shillings
House boy	20 shillings
Cook	40 shillings
Kitchen boy	14 shillings
Dhobi	25 shillings.[47]

Neither agricultural labourers nor domestic servants received the rations and benefits which an askari was entitled to and most agricultural labourers preferred to take work in the vicinity of their family plot of land which could provide them with essential food stuffs.

Rates of pay for drivers in the KAR in 1940 were also good. First class drivers received 60 shillings a month, second class drivers received 50 shillings a month and learners up to 30 shillings. Drivers' pay had had to be increased in order to draw more African recruits.

Apart from incentives of increased pay through promotion, KAR askaris could also earn proficiency pay. This was only granted to men with one year's service in the ordinary ranks, either as a private or as an unpaid lance corporal. As from April 1940, 1st class proficiency pay was an extra 4 shillings a month and 2nd class was an extra 2 shillings a month.[48]

Before the war askaris were encouraged to enlist for 7 years in the colours and 5 in the reserve or 3 in the colours and 9 in the reserve. They could re-engage for further periods of 3 years. Those recruited during the war were taken on for the duration of hostilities plus a further 12 months. Before the war promotion was fairly slow and a sergeant would generally have at least ten years' service, a CSM, fifteen. During the war further opportunities for promotion presented themselves. English-speaking Africans on whom new British officers relied for translations, were promoted quicker than most. At the beginning of the war learning an African language was part of an officer's training, but as the war progressed it became official policy that African recruits should learn English.

On retirement after 15 years' service and a good conduct record, the ex-askari was exempted from hut tax. This exemption became unacceptable to the civil authorities and it was later abolished. Although tax examptions did not apply to Africans who enlisted during the Second World War, a retired askari at that time was a privileged and respected member of the community and his status may well have influenced those who chose to sign up for the duration of hostilities.

Ex-askaris with good conduct records, which, incidentally, were difficult to acquire, were entitled to a firearms licence. These licences were hard to come by and a useful asset for those who sought to supplement their income and vary their diet by game hunting. Ex-askaris were also preferred as

messengers and game scouts, especially if they were already firearms licence holders.

The askari was entitled to a family remittance, payable directly to his wife, or if he were unmarried, to his mother or sister. Many askaris married on their first leave because, by that time, they had accumulated enough money to buy cattle for a bride payment. The remittance made a substantial difference to the standard of living of army wives, compared to other women in a village. A family man would, in most cases, wish to safeguard the livelihood of his kinsfolk before embarking on a career of active service in the KAR. The family remittance reassured the askari that the welfare of his family was catered for.

For those fit enough to be recruited, the KAR provided medical services. Each battalion had its own British Medical Officer and its team of African Medical Orderlies. Their task was not easy, particularly with the prevalence of venereal disease which threatened the efficiency of the KAR during the Abyssinian campaign, despite attempts at health education. Although askaris ran the risk of being killed or maimed in action, in general they were healthier than the civilian population. Army diet and training kept them well nourished and fit and they had better access to up to date medical supplies and attention than did other Africans. An askari's spiritual welfare was also catered for if he was inclined to Christianity. The second Nyasaland battalion had a Roman Catholic priest and a Church of Scotland minister whilecampaigning in British Somaliland and Abyssinia.49 Other

battalions were similarly staffed.

On the material side each askari was provided with a uniform allowance which was probably the most extensive wardrobe he had ever possessed. Some recruits were enlisted, clad only in blankets. As from November 1939 the uniform provided was; 2 khaki drill blouses, 1 pair of boots, 1 slouch hat, 2 pairs of khaki drill shorts, 4 pairs of socks and 1 blue jersey. This issue was renewed every 18 months.[50]

Askaris were entitled to a fortnight's leave per annum but this could pose logistic problems. Although he was officially allowed "fourteen clear days at his home", travelling time could mean that a man was absent for several months. This was one disadvantage when recruiting tribes from outlying areas and it led to men being posted absent without leave when there was no justification. The amount of leave was hardly an enticement for most who joined the KAR and rightful leave of absence was not always forthcoming because of the ruling during war time that only 5% of a unit could be absent at one time. When the KAR began to serve abroad it became increasingly difficult for askaris to receive the home leave they were entitled to. However, similar circumstances existed for many British troops. While on leave the askari had to make do without his army rations and meals. To keep their men fighting fit, each askari on leave was given an extra ration allowance of 25 cents a day. The askari was to travel in uniform but he had to leave arms and equipment at the base.

An interesting exception to the general pattern of entitlement to leave was made for the Kalenjin and Elgeo tribes who practised adult circumcision rites every seven years. These tribes had two months circumcision leave written into their contract. The concession removed an obstacle which might have prevented recruitment from these peoples. They were considered useful soldiers and their tribal customs were respected.[51]

The dietary requirements of Moslems were also taken into consideration so that their religion could not provide an impediment to recruitment. Leibigs canning factory in Nairobi held a demonstration for Moslem chiefs, to show that animals were slaughtered in the appropriate way before the meat was cooked and canned. Each tin carried a label explaining that it contained meat from an animal that had had its throat cut. The chiefs were able to report back to aspiring askaris among their peoples, that it was acceptable to eat the tinned 'bully beef' provided by Leibigs for the KAR.

While the KAR offered many rewards to a loyal and long-serving askari, the Regiment maintained a strict discipline which reflected the public school upbringing of many of its officers. The discipline did not have a detrimental effect on recruitment among the type of men which the Regiment wanted to recruit. All army recruits were assessed for their amenability to discipline and were given strong warnings that it must be accepted. This applied as much to the Africans who joined the KAR as it did to those British civilians who joined British regiments.

Certain punishments existed in the KAR which had been outlawed in the British army. Up to 1942 a rhino rawhide truncheon or 'kiboko' was used to inflict corporal punishment. This was supposed to be carried out by the African RSM in front of the whole battalion. It had to be authorised by a court martial, except in the Tanganyika battalion where, on active service, it could be awarded at the discretion of the Commanding Officer. The Governors' Conference at Nairobi was urgently requested to bring the other territories into line with Tanganyika because it was inconvenient for COs to hold courts martial on active service. Other pressure groups, such as the League of Coloured Peoples based in London, and the War Office and the Army Council, also disagreed. West Africans serving in East Africa were not subject to flogging without a court martial and critics of the arbitrary powers of 6KAR's Commanding Officers, pointed out this inconsistency. In January 1941 it was ruled that floggings in all battalions could only be awarded after a court martial.[52] This did not put an end to the practice.

Other punishments included extra fatigues, extra parades, showing articles clean, confinement to barracks, detention, pay stoppages (which proved most effective) and, ultimately, dismissal. Many of these were standard practice in the British army.

The effectiveness of a punishment was best judged by its recipient. The use of confinement to strong stone cells during the East African campaign was not always a deterrent. These cells were built specially for the purpose in the

area near Mandera, but the East African askaris loved them; they were good, stone built houses which, above all, were cool and a welcome relief from the hot, dry climate of the Hargeisa plateau.[53]

Conditions of service in the KAR were, on the whole, attractive to Africans. There was no need to alter them even to satisfy the Ganda, who complained that the KAR rations were rough on their stomachs because they were more used to a diet of soft foods such as steamed plantains. Sufficient men came forward during the first phase of recruitment, 1939 to 1941, and there was no need to reassess conditions of service and make sweeping alterations during that period.

At this time the KAR was as yet unable to accommodate every hopeful recruit in its ranks and the British maintained their pre-war policy of recruiting from what were considered the traditionally martial tribes. Convenient theories existed which connected martial qualities with tribal customs, physical build, diet or local environment. Individual Africans rarely had the education or opportunity to defend themselves against stereotyping. Their response tended to perpetuate their tribe's attributed martial or non-martial characteristics because they strove to live up (or down) to their reputation. Only occasionally could individuals defy tradition and refuse to submit to the pressure to conform. Then a man from a non-martial tribe could prove himself a good soldier or a man from a martial tribe get himself dismissed from the KAR as 'unlikely to become efficient'. However, it was more often the case that Africans took a

pride in belonging to a traditionally martial tribe and consciously tried to be typical.

In Uganda the British linked martial qualities to diet. The traditional recruiting areas were those inhabited by people who ate grain. People whose main diet was plantains, a coarse form of banana, were thought to be less suitable for the army. This dietary distinction existed in the minds of the recruiting officers because their predecessors had found suitable infantry among the grain eaters and had consequently attributed fighting qualities to them indiscriminately. Whether or not individuals within the groups had those military qualities was unimportant; what mattered was the reputation attributed to them.

The simple stereotype of the banana-eater was that he was a product of his environment. The ready availability of food together with an easy climate had made him lazy, while the brewing of banana beer ('pombi') made him a drunkard. Missionary activities too, had contributed to his downfall. He had been given an education which made him arrogant and unwilling to accept army discipline. But if the banana-eater had little to offer the KAR, the Regiment had little to offer him in return, other than hard work and a reduction in his leisure time.

By contrast the grain-eater was believed to have developed stamina through hard work. He was physically robust from a diet of millet supplemented by meat. He was considered more primitive, more economically backward, but eminently more suitable for recruitment to the KAR. He was uneducated

and so more amenable to army discipline. Free from missionary influence, he could be moulded into a smart and obedient soldier. To the grain-eater, so it was thought, the KAR offered a life of adventure and an improvement in living standards. Flattered by the recruiting officer's picture of his people, the grain-eater would usually react by doing his utmost not to detract from this favourable image.

For the British, these convenient categories were reassuring. The army could be confident that it was on safe ground while it recruited the majority of its soldiers from traditional areas. Generalisations about African peoples were passed on to new British officers as they arrived in East Africa. Over-simplifications meant that officers accepted as self-evident the differences between African societies and took less notice of differences between individuals. Lieutenant Colonel H.P.L. Glass, M.C., who commanded 'B' Company 2KAR in 1939, quoted a fellow officer as saying;

"The blacker their face, the huskier their voice, the thicker their neck, the darker their skin and the more remote parts of Africa they came from - the better soldier they made."[54]

Such views were widely held.

Patterns of recruitment from 1939 to 1941 were based on the belief that certain tribes had martial characteristics. In Nyasaland nearly all the peoples were popular with the KAR, though the greatest number of recruits came from the Yao, the Ngoni, the Nchewa, and the Nguru. In Tanganyika

the Nyamwezi were easily the most popular recruits but the Yao, Ngoni, Sukuma and Hehe also ranked highly. In Kenya the Kamba, Nandi, Elgeo and Luo were most frequently recruited. In Uganda peoples believed to possess martial characteristics were the Acholi, the Langi, the Nubi, the Teso and those from the West Nile district.

Each separate battalion of the KAR had a predominance of particular tribes in its combatant ranks. The tribal composition of each battalion altered during the course of the war as new areas of recruitment were tapped and less emphasis was placed on recruiting from the traditional areas.

In 1938 the official statistical returns[55] for the racial composition of the Southern Brigade reveal that the Yao were the most favoured tribe. In 1KAR, of 554 African ranks, 146 were Yao and in 2KAR, of 267 African ranks, 71 were Yao. They were the largest tribal group in each Nyasaland battalion and composed nearly a third of the Nyasaland contingent. Major R.W. Kettlewell, C.M.G.,[56] who was with the KAR Reserve of Officers (KARRO) at Zomba from 1938 to 1939 wrote that;

"There were undoubted preferential and traditional influences in the choice of tribes for recruitment."

He argued that tribes of the Southern Province of Nyasaland predominated because of their proximity to Zomba. Zomba had a relatively high population and there was less alternative employment. He praised the Yao as "outstanding", a tribe with a war-like tradition and a long association with the

KAR. By nature they were thought to be a soldiering people who had stood up well to their rivals in the slave trade, the Ngoni. The Yao had also shown hostility towards Livingstone's missionary activities in the Zambezi area in the 1860s. The Yao chief, Matschemba, had resisted German expeditions into the hinterland of German East Africa in the 1890s.[57] Such aspects of Yao history may have been known to individual British Officers and their knowledge might have been the original basis for labelling the Yao as a tribe with a war-like tradition. Once the Yao had acquired the reputation they could only live up to it. They were expected to make good soldiers and they made good soldiers.

However, in Tanganyika far fewer Yao were recruited to 6KAR; only seven out of a battalion of 317. The Yao came from the south of Tanganyika and this was possibly too far from Dar es Salaam for them to be recruited in large numbers in 1938. During the war, recruiting officers were forced to go into the outlying areas.

In Nyasaland the Yao maintained their position as a strong quarter of 1KAR during the war, as noted by Colonel D.J. Bannister.[58] one-time Company Commander in that battalion. His statistical breakdown of 1KAR in July 1941 shows that there were 213 Yao in a greatly expanded establishment of 919 African ranks, including 29 Yao N.C.Os. Bannister himself described the Yao and also the Nyanja, as "steady types" who had a calming influence on the Somali element of the Somaliland Camel Corps in peace-time. Lieutenant Colonel H.P.L. Glass[59], Company Commander of 'B' Company 2KAR in

1939, put the Yao at the top of his list of good soldiers. He claimed that askaris in his Company at Masoko and at the Regimental Depot in Zomba were recruited from the following tribes in order of priority; Yao, Ngoni, Ncheu, Nguru, Nyanja and Ntonga. Colonel J.H.S. Martin,[60] who served with 1/1KAR and 1/6KAR from 1940 to 1942, confirmed these viewpoints and listed the Yao, Awemba and Ntonga as the major fighting tribes of Nyasaland.

Second to the Yao in 1938, in both Nyasaland battalions, were the Nyanja, also from the south of Nyasaland, who formed one of the larger tribal groups of central Africa. In 1/KAR, in October 1938, there were 97 Nyanja out of a total strength of 554 Africans. The statistics confirm the proportions recalled by Colonel Humphrey Williams who served with 1KAR and 6KAR in the 1930s just before the war. Colonel Williams[61] believed that the Yao and the Nyanja together composed two-thirds of the Nyasaland tribes recruited in the 1930s and that the remaining third consisted of a mixture of tribes of whom the Ntonga, Ngoni and Nchewa (a sub-tribe of the Ngoni) were the most important. These men came from villages where there was little chance of alternative employment.

During the war, Colonel Williams maintained, the idea of tribal quotas was abandoned and recruiting officers were encouraged to think of their recruits as Nyasas. This helped to foster a spirit of unity in the Nyasaland battalions. Because tribal quotas were not strictly applied, the number of Nguru in 1KAR greatly expanded. In December 1938, they were well represented with 90 men in a battalion of 554

Africans. By July 1941, Bannister's statistical analysis indicates 281 Nguru out of a total of 919 Africans. The Nguru overtook the Yao and the Nyanja in the ordinary ranks though not in the non-commissioned ranks. The Nguru were considered brave but less intelligent than the Yao, Nyanja, Ngoni and Ntonga. They were thought more stable than the Ntonga in particular, whom Colonel Martin described as "volatile" and more ruthless and difficult to control. Such opinions, passed on from one officer to another, eventually became accepted as fact and a tribal group gained a reputation which events did not always justify.

In Tanganyika too, tribal stereotyping existed. Recruitment to the sixth battalion followed a traditional pattern for the country of Tanganyika despite a comparatively short British presence there. British judgement of martial qualities inherent in certain tribes coincided with German opinions. It was no secret as to which tribes had fought well for the Germans during the East African campaign of World War One. In recruiting to the sixth battalion the British opted for the same tribes as those which had reputedly fought well for the Germans. So-called martial qualities were rated more highly than the fragile loyalty which Tanganyikan Africans might offer their former colonial masters, the Germans. Strength, physique and a soldiering tradition remained the most important criteria. When 25KAR, a Tanganyikan battalion formed during the war, embarked for Madagascar in 1942, one old NCO possessed the iron cross awarded him for bravery in the service of the Germans in World War One.

The Germans, during their colonial period in East Africa, had recruited both native and foreign troops. In 1889, when they first raised their "Schutztruppe" there were large numbers of Sudanese and Zulus. Both British and Germans held high opinions of the Sudanese but the Germans were forced to abandon their recruitment because of the political problems arising from the enlistment of subjects of the Khedive of Egypt. Unlike the British they did not turn to 'press-ganging'! By the outbreak of the First World War the Germans recruited the majority of their men from Tanganyika itself.

The tribes recruited to the German Protectorate Force were the Nyamwezi, the Sukuma, the Hehe, the Ngoni, the Yao, the Ha and some Nyasaland tribes. The Masai were considered useful as auxiliaries and irregulars. Of the Nyamwezi it was said:

"Their toughness in toil and privations, their power of resistance to climatic conditions, their great knowledge of the country and of European customs, make the Nyamwezi good fighters."[62]

The British author of this comment in 1916 might just as well have been writing in 1938. Those who fought well for the Germans also fought well for the British. The Nyamwezi and Sukuma were the best represented tribes in the German forces of World War One. Between the wars they had been frequently used as porters by traders and people on safari. In December 1938 they were similarly represented in the sixth battalion of the KAR. Eighty-four of the 317 Africans in the battalion were Nyamwezi, 46 were Sukuma.[63]

Because 6KAR was formed during World War One, there may have been individuals who fought under von Lettow Worbeck and then enlisted for the KAR immediately afterwards in 1917. The original intention of the British was to recruit tribes native to Tanganyika for 6KAR, in accordance with the terms of the League of Nations mandate. This proved impossible during the inter-war period but the policy was once more adopted and implemented in the Second World War.

The Germans deliberately encouraged the askari to see himself as belonging to a unique tribe through having joined the army. A feeling of superiority was inculcated and care was taken that soldiers should not be quartered where they could mix easily with the civilian population. The predominance of Nyamwezi and Sukuma in both the German Protectorate Force and the KAR could be attributed to good German propaganda in the first instance which maintained the interest of recruited tribes in a military lifestyle. However, the Sukuma were the tribe with the largest population in Tanganyika and this fact needs to be taken into account when considering why they enlisted in the army in such great numbers.[64] The Nyamwezi too, were numerically strong and again this needs to be balanced against other factors which influenced their recruitment such as the temperament attributed to them.

Brigadier G.H. Cree,[65] who served with 6KAR in Tanganyika from 1931 to 1936, described the Nyamwezi as "good solid yokels" who had a good physique and were amenable to discipline. He likened them to the Sukuma but opinions on tribal temperament were not always concurrent. Colonel Fowkes,

Commander of the Southern Brigade in 1938, felt that the proportion of Sukuma in 6KAR was too high;

"I am not certain that the prosperity of the land they live in has not slightly weakened their morale",[66] he wrote.

A relationship between martial qualities and climatic, economic or geographical conditions was often drawn. The Chagga from the foothills of Kilimanjaro were thought too prosperous to be recruited. The better soldiers came from the poorer, infertile areas, it was thought, and consequently they had a more positive and appreciative attitude. The local people around Dar es Salaam were not recruited because they were too sophisticated. The British RSM with 6KAR in 1935 recorded;

"The local people from around D.S.M. were not enlisted - too 'fly' and fond of town life ... nor the Wachagga from the foothills of Kilimanjaro who were comfortably off at home and had no wish to submit themselves to military discipline."[67]

Both British and Germans tended to rate tribes on the basis of how well they had stood up to the Masai in the past. Smaller tribes such as the Pare, Mbugu, Digo and Shambaa had been reluctant to confront the Masai and became labelled as cowardly. The Hehe, a reasonably large tribe, were thought to be brave because those from Izega on the Ruaha had taken part in the rising of 1905 to 1906, against the Germans. The British RSM, J.D. Thomson, who was serving with 6KAR in 1935, explained;

"The recruits were selected from areas where the men were reckoned to be good soldiering material. When I arrived in 1935 we had a batch of Wahehe from the Iringa District. Although rather small physically, they made excellent soldiers. The Germans, during their occupation of the country before the First World War, had never been able to subdue this tribe."[68]

Despite this, the Germans enlisted the Hehe as soldiers and later in the century they served the British. Once again a soldiering tradition outweighed any sense of loyalty to particular European governments. In October 1938, there were 32 Hehe in 6KAR, out of a total of 317 men. Major General R.S.N. Mans,[69] who served with 1/6KAR, included the Hehe in his list of martial tribes; the Nyamwezi, Ngoni, Hehe, Tende and Luo. Mans wrote that the Hehe were known for their hatred of the Germans and Cree emphasised their pride and warrior tradition. To Major Henry A. Walker,[70] who served with 6KAR, the Hehe were first class in attack and the Nyamwezi were first class in defence. If such simplistic conclusions were passed on to the men themselves, no doubt they did their best to excel themselves in the appropriate role.

Most British officers built up their own list of martial tribes and their special characteristics. Opinions differed as to which tribes made the very best soldiers. For Lieutenant Colonel George Gordon Robson[71] who served with 1/6KAR and 3/6KAR the Ngoni were the best askaris followed by the Nyamwezi, Hehe and Yao. The Ngoni were connected with the famous Zulus from South Africa, who were renowned for their

warrior tradition and their opposition to European settlers in the early 19th century. Robson found the Sukuma 'ponderous and slow-witted', the Luo full of bravado with a tendency to 'pack up' in times of stress and the Tende 'scruffy but quite courageous'. Major G.B. Whitworth [72], who served with 5/6KAR and 6KAR from 1945 to 1946, compared the Luo to the Kikuyu of Kenya, of whom he had had experience in the East African Civil and Military Police from 1944 to 1945. The Luo, he believed, were rather too difficult and he attributed this to their diet, as they were 'fish-eaters' from Lake Victoria. In his view they made good clerks and orderlies. The Luo had 18 men in 6KAR in October 1938. Cree did not rate the Luo very highly either and those he recruited in 1936 did not turn out to be particularly satisfactory. It seems the Luo were the nearest equivalent the Southern Brigade could produce to the supposedly arrogant Kikuyu and Ganda of the Northern Brigade.

For Tanganyika and Nyasaland the problem was to encourage men into the army in the face of alternative employment. Those thought to have the necessary aptitude for skilled tasks such as signalling were from the Tukuyu and Lindi areas of Southern Tanganyika. The Tukuyu had the double advantage of being both intelligent and healthy because their area was malaria-free. The Lindi were reputed to have served the Germans well in World War One.

In October 1938 Colonel Fowkes expressed his concern that the martial people of Nyasaland were being attracted away from the army by well-paid employment in Rhodesia and South

Africa.[73] The Witwatersrand Native Labour Association recruited in Nyasaland for short-term contracts in the Rand gold mines. Mine work had debilitated many of the Ngoni and Ntonga so that they became unfit to serve as soldiers.

With this problem in mind, though the main emphasis continued to be upon recruiting from the traditionally martial peoples, previously untried groups such as the Nchewa, were tested for their martial qualities. In September 1939 in Tanganyika, Hugh S. Senior, an officer of 6KAR, was sent to recruit another tribe new to the KAR. Senior went to Musoma and North Mara on Lake Victoria to enlist Tende for a second battalion. The Tende, hitherto an unknown quantity as far as the KAR were concerned, proved to be an 'unqualified success'. They flocked into the recruiting camp and after the medical selection process, were issued with uniforms. After a month's squad drill they were ready to march to Musoma and then travelled by steamer and train to the Depot in Dar es Salaam. The new recruits, 150 strong, were met there by the KAR band. Later they went on to excel themselves in the East African campaign and in Burma. Expectations were high and the Tende fulfilled the expectations. The choice of tribe may have been inconsequential. In contrast however, those with a more timid temperament did hide in the bush at the prospect of labour service in the East African campaign. The 'backward and suspicious' Ha of Kimoga District in Tanganyika took alarm despite the measures taken to reassure them that they were not required as combatants.[74]

Other tribes in Tanganyika could not be recruited on medical

grounds. The Zarumu of Temeke District suffered so much from malnutrition that they did not have the energy to do a day's work. The Gogo were thought to have a 'congenital lack of initiative' and to be too wild to mould into soldiers despite their attempts to ape the Masai hair-style and custom of painting their bodies with red earth.

Medical tests for the army remained stringent and when labour conscription and a stricter quota system were introduced in 1941, many men were found to be unfit. Figures kept at Ufipa for November 1940 to January 1941 reveal that more than one in three applicants were rejected at local examinations and more still at the Depot after further tests. This was among the Fipa, a tribe which was considered fairly healthy. For the Ha the situation was far worse, with only one man fit in ten.[75] In Britain only 5% of the population was unfit when conscription was introduced. Such medical facts were disquieting and suggested that the authorities were only concerned with the physical fitness of Africans when they were needed as soldiers and labourers. The War brought the poor state of African health in general to the attention of the authorities and the white press in East Africa. The latter did not hesitate to comment on the need to provide better health services for the African population whether there was a war on or not.

There was, then, a variety of reasons why certain tribes were selected for service with the KAR's Southern Brigade; military tradition; reaction to the Masai; reaction to the Germans; physical strength and build; temperament;

geographical position; diet; prosperity; availability of alternative employment; knowledge or lack of knowledge of European customs; education or lack of education; all these and other factors were considered when selecting tribes for recruitment.

There was very little overlap between the tribes recruited for the Northern and Southern Brigades. Only the Luo were represented in both, 18 in the Southern Brigade in October 1938 and 179 in the Northern Brigade in December 1938. The Luo were more popular with the recruiting authorities of the latter but their more extensive recruitment is not surprising as there were far more Luo in Kenya than there were in Tanganyika. During the 15th and 16th centuries the Nilotic Luo had migrated southwards and some of them had eventually settled on the shores of Lake Victoria, mainly the north-eastern shore.

Tribes recruited to the Northern Brigade were divided into collective groups of Nilotic Sudanese, Nilotic Congo, Bantu, Nilo-Hamitic and Hamitic. There were no restrictions on 3KAR, 4KAR and 5KAR recruiting outside the countries in which they were based and they even recruited as far afield as Tanganyika, the Congo, the Sudan and Abyssinia.

The third battalion was based in Nairobi and recruited most of its men in Kenya, with a fair proportion from Uganda. The largest tribal group in the battalion in December 1938 were the Nandi from Nyanza province in the west of Kenya. There were 61 Nandi out of a total 330 African combatant

ranks.[76] The Nandi were also well represented in 5KAR and in the Transport Corps. They were chosen for their physical qualities and Major G.B. Whitworth described them as athletic, good at bush craft and tracking and very fleet of foot. The Nandi were also praised by Major T.R. King who served with 5KAR throughout the Second World War.[77] They had a warlike tradition and had stood up well against the Masai from the vantage point of their escarpment overlooking Lake Victoria. They were also a tribe which the British had found difficult to subdue around the turn of the century. Their territory was just to the north-east of Lake Victoria and their hostility endangered the communications links between Uganda and the coast. It took several years for the Nandi to be subjugated. In 5KAR the Nandi were resentful because none of them was promoted to the non-commissioned ranks. These were mostly filled by Somalis, who considered themselves superior to Kenyan Africans. The Nandi too, had their own ideas about tribal hierarchy and thought it beneath their duty to do domestic chores which were more fitting for lesser peoples than themselves. The Nandi proved to be competent soldiers in the KAR and in a pamphlet from the series 'The Peoples of Kenya', published for the education of British officers in 1944, they were described as 'people in whom there is much good'. Unfortunately they gained a poor reputation later in the war when less tribal control resulted in a deterioration of morals and an increased indulgence in alcohol. Allegations of this sort were made by Alexander D. Shireff, Company Commander with 5KAR in the Burma campaign.

Shireff was not alone in his opinion that the quality of the Regiment deteriorated during the war. G. Elcoat, who served with 3KAR believed that the battalion was a fine body of hand-picked men until it was divided into 1/3KAR and 1/2KAR in 1940, when its quality was diluted.

Before this dilution occurred, 3KAR had consisted mainly of Nandi and of Acholi from the Gulu and Chua provinces of northern Uganda. There were also large numbers of Kamba, Lumbwa, Luo, Elgeo and Sudanese. Of these the Kamba, just 40 miles from Nairobi, were easily the most popular with Europeans. They did not have a great military tradition like some other African tribes but they were 'good fighters with an effective military organisation.'[78] They were employed in many occupations in addition to the army, including the railway, the Post Office and as craftsmen and mechanics. They had a high reputation for loyalty to the government and had proved this by serving in their thousands during World War One. Like the Nandi, the Kamba had at first proved troublesome to the British by resisting attempts to swallow their territory into the British East Africa Protectorate. Then they had been renowned for their wile and their venomous arrow tips. Opinions changed and by the Second World War it was thought that the Kamba temperament made them good soldiers. They were held to be cheerful in adversity, constantly ready to help those in difficulties and amenable to military discipline. Such aptitudes made them the best all round soldiers in East Africa and the constant acknowledgement of this helped to mould the individual Kamba. Kamba

ambushes of unwary nineteenth century European travellers were not dwelt on by those who sought to build and maintain a new image of the tribe, consciously or sub-consciously. A Kamba askari had an ideal to live up to and had to demonstrate the excellent qualities attributed to him. The Kamba were promoted quickly and found skilled employment in the ancillary services - the Royal Electrical and Mechanical Engineers (REME), the East African Armoured Cars, the artillery and the Signals. Of the 85 Africans in the Northern Brigade's Signal company in December 1938, 61 were Kamba.

There were also large numbers of Kamba in 5KAR, based at Meru; 91 out of 518. Major T.R. King commended the Kamba as 'cheerful, intelligent, good all round soldiers and the backbone of both 3KAR and 5KAR.' His view of the Somalis, of whom there were 57 in 5KAR and 29 in 3KAR, was that they were fanatical fighters but needed good management. They had shown considerable aggression in defying an extension of British power in Jubaland Province, Kenya at the close of the nineteenth century. The Somali were considered to be people of a volatile nature. Certainly the Camel Corps was diluted with Yao and Nyanja as a steadying influence on the Somali. It was thought necessary to impress on these latter the idea of the KAR as a tribe in itself and this was done through the Somali N.C.Os.

British officers developed their picture of an African tribe through personal experience of individuals, and for some the individual proved the quality of the whole tribe. Shireff showed particular admiration for his Somali sergeant, Korah,

who became a Warrant Officer Platoon Commander and served as such in Burma, later winning an M.M. Shireff believed that the Somalis, as Moslems, did not have the same weakness as the Nandi and never drank. In this instance a racial stereotype was based on rules of religion which demanded strength of character. Sergeant Korah too had his own ideas of the martial tribes of East Africa. Obviously he rated his own people highly, secondly the Samburu (a Masai off-shoot) and next the Nandi. Korah reckoned that of all the tribes in 5KAR only these would go forward under fire. However, that would be a daunting experience for any soldier, regardless of race or nationality. Korah spoke from experience as he had served with the battalion in northern Kenya, Madagascar and then Burma. Although Korah praised the Kamba in defence, he claimed they were reluctant to go forward under fire, an understandably human characteristic. Korah rated the Luo as good on parade but useless in war.

The Luo districts were full of old soldiers and they had a strong military tradition in Kenya. In practice it was thought that many Luo did not live up to their reputation as good fighters. For Shireff, the exceptions proved the rule about the tribe and he recalled many outstanding individual Luo askaris such as Corporal Raguti whose merits proved to Shireff that he was not typical of his tribe. Thus, a good soldier could represent a good fighting tribe or he could be the 'odd man out' from a bad tribe. For Major T.R. King, who held the Luo to be 'good stolid men all round', his Luo RSM was the perfect example of an able veteran of

the First World War who drilled the battalion as competently as a European. King also recalled a badly wounded Luo Corporal in an air-raid on Wajir, who was more concerned with retrieving his rifle than with his own personal injury.

At the end of the Abyssinian campaign many Kavirondo tribes, including the Nilotic Luo, were replaced by Kamba, Nandi and Samburu. This suggests the wide availability of the preferred martial tribes even at this later stage in the war and shows that the KAR could afford to discard unsuitable men. However, new mechanised units formed at this time accounted for the transfer of some Luo whom Brian Kirwan maintained were also well-suited to the handling of artillery. Clearly, there was some disagreement over the Luo and most British officers held strong opinions of them.

Many officers had their favourites and Shireff preferred the Samburu. He claimed their recruitment was originally due to David Kemble, Commander of 'C' Company 5KAR, who arrived in East Africa in 1936 and went hunting in the Samburu district. This led him later to recruit Samburu and Turkana for 5KAR and it was the Samburu who proved the better soldiers. Like the Nandi, Samburu men were brought up to hide any feelings of fear and made excellent soldiers. The Turkana were believed to have been outstanding warriors before the British colonisation of Kenya, but they did not adapt to army life and were susceptible to bronchial diseases. Many of them became scouts or guides for the KAR instead of soldiers. Unlike other platoons in 5KAR's 'B' company, the Samburu platoon consisted entirely of men from that tribe.

Usually the policy was to spread each tribal group throughout the battalion to avoid any one tribe becoming too dominant in a particular unit. This suggests that the Samburu were more trustworthy than other tribes which might plan sedition when united.

The Kikuyu were not recruited to the KAR infantry in large numbers. They did not choose to join the army and mix with tribes they regarded as their inferiors. However, they did join up as stretcher bearers, medical orderlies and office clerks, roles which seemingly had more status. The Jinja War Diary for June 1940 recorded;

"Lieutenant D. Anderson left to recruit 150 Kikuyu stretcher bearers at Nyeri."

The British judged the Uganda equivalent to the Kikuyu to be the Ganda. Even so there were 77 from that tribe in Uganda's 4KAR at the end of 1938. When recruiting was undertaken for the new territorial battalion 7KAR, just before war broke out, one of the first two companies was largely of Ganda composition. The Ganda were thought typical of the easy living banana-eaters and their proximity to the main towns of Uganda made them more sophisticated than the askaris from the remoter areas. Their mission school education meant that many became clerks and orderlies. Educational standards at that time were much higher among the Ganda than any of the other East African peoples. In the army, educated recruits were not particularly necessary but the Ganda volunteered for the few skilled tasks available.

Although there were 77 Ganda in 4KAR at the end of 1938, there were nearly twice as many Acholi. These were an extremely popular tribe in the KAR and they had a strong family and tribal custom of joining up. Major C,F, Broomfield,[79] Company Commander with 4KAR, described the Acholi as 'of fighting stock', men who had followed their fathers' and grandfathers' footsteps to fight for 'King Georgi'. The Acholi were quickly promoted to N.C.Os once the supply of Nubi N.C.Osdwindled. A tradition of family success in the Regiment encouraged younger sons to enlist, such as Daniel Otim[80] whose father had been a corporal in 5KAR. The boy had been to secondary school and his knowledge of English helped him to enter as a company clerk. He soon became a lance-corporal and by 1941 he was the African RSM with 7KAR. The Acholi were not so keen on the promotion of certain other tribes. They would not accept orders from Langi although they accepted Teso and Lugbara N.C.Os. Attempts to promote Langi N.C.Os nearly always failed.

At the end of the colonial period in East Africa the Acholi still comprised the bulk of the Ugandan armed forces along with the West Nile tribes, such as the Alur, Lugbara and Madi and the Langi and Teso. The West Nile was a non-productive area,[81] remote and infertile. During the war it was thought more politic to recruit from such areas which were not involved with vital food production or cash crops. African farmers were needed at home to produce food, despite the bulk of the heavy work being done by women. In Kenya, African chiefs and headmen soon complained if all their young men were called into the KAR. When Captain R.A. Malyn

arrived in Africa in 1940, his first assignment after leaving the officers' training unit at Nakuru, was to go on a recruiting safari to the West Nile and recruit the strength of two battalions. When 7KAR was formed in June 1939, recruiting began in these traditional northern provinces and among the Teso and Sebei from the east. On one recruiting safari in 1940 to the Acholi, Langi and Lugbara regions, a large number of Lugbara from the Belgian Congo joined up. It was only when family remittances were sent out months later that it was realised that 50 men in one company alone were from the Belgian Congo.[82] African loyalty to particular European governments meant very little.

In Uganda, the frontier with Congo was potentially a danger area. The King of the Belgians had surrendered to the Germans by 1940 and there was speculation that the Belgian Congo might receive a German military mission. The British Consul in Leopoldville[83] at that time feared that the surrender of French colonies might be followed by the surrender of Belgian colonies. In the event, a British military mission under Colonel Mackenzie was despatched to the Congo to give the government support. Thus, the Congo Lugbara who had 'defected' to the KAR, unaware of artificially imposed colonial borders, ended up on the same side as their fellow Congolese.

In Uganda, the idea that certain tribes were suitable for specific tasks, was also applied. The Konjo from the Ruwenzori mountains, south of Lake Albert, were recruited to REME because of their small build, which made them unsuitable

as infantry. The Ganda were recruited to the Ambulance Corps because numbers of them had had the opportunity of learning to drive. Some enterprising Ganda took the ambulance driving test in another man's name, for a fee of five shillings or so. Thus some totally incompetent drivers got into the Ambulance Corps.

Not every new recruiting venture was equally successful during the first phase of recruitment, 1939 to 1941. The experiment of recruiting numbers of Karamojong from north-east Uganda had to be abandoned. Thirty men were enlisted into 7KAR when the new battalion was formed but they had to be returned to their homes after a few months. They were only prepared to take discipline from British N.C.Os and ignored orders from African N.C.Os. Their cards were stamped U.B.E. - unlikely to become efficient. A similar reaction was found among the Kurya, who had previously fought successfully against the Masai but refused to accept army discipline.[84] Similarly, the recruitment of Nyoro for 2/4KAR by Major Channer was based on the idea that they had fought well against the British at the time when Uganda was being brought under British protection, but many of his recruits had to be discharged because they seemed unlikely to make good soldiers.

It was then, predominantly men from the districts traditionally regarded as martial, reinforced by a number of previously untried groups, who made up the strength of the battalions expanded and formed between 1939 and 1941.

CHAPTER TWO

The Second Phase of Recruitment 1941 to 1943

In July 1941 the African Auxiliary Pioneer Corps (AAPC) was formed. It marked the beginning of a new phase of extensive recruitment to meet the demands of the campaign in North Africa. The foundations of the AAPC lay in the East African Military Labour Service (EAMLS). This unit was formed shortly after the Italian declaration of war and undertook important work in the East African Campaign. The EAMLS was basically a unit of African labourers who worked as a back up team for the KAR infantry, digging fortifications and building roads. The AAPC was slightly different and had a much wider range of duties. While the East African campaign was still underway Middle East Command looked to East Africa to supply 'trained and disciplined labour' for building railways and bridges, unloading stores, mending roads and other similar duties in North Africa. The AAPC was formed to meet this need. Limits on the supply of U.K. manpower in the spring of 1941 forced the War Office to allot quotas of British troops to all overseas commands. Subsequently Middle East Command drew up a comprehensive programme for the use of Africans who would be recruited to the AAPC.

This meant a reassessment of the role of East Africa in the war effort and the position of the KAR. Major General A.J.K. Pigott,[1] in his report on Army Manpower Problems suggested three reasons for limits on the number of East Africans available as pioneers in 1941. First, Pigott

stressed that African labourers were needed in Africa to produce the food and raw materials which had formerly been produced elsewhere. Second, it was difficult to obtain sufficient British officers and N.C.Os of adequate quality. The number of British officers available determined the number of units which could be formed, but every British officer allocated to an African unit meant one less for a British unit. Last, there were vast problems in transporting African units from the colonies to Egypt and the only practical route was by sea. This method of transport had an adverse effect on recruiting because unlike overland transport, it made Africans more conscious that they were travelling further from their homes than ever before and because delays in embarkation meant that there were large numbers of inactive recruits in the ports when the government was hoping to impress on the local populace the urgency of the cause for which their help was requested.

In order to avoid large scale recruitment in Africa, which might reduce the availability of labour for vital civilian work, alternative suggestions were considered, but dismissed as impractical. For example, an idea to employ Italian prisoners of war, captured in large numbers during the East African campaign, was abandoned because of the expense of providing guards and because the Geneva Convention forbade the use of prisoners of war in forward areas. But the supply of volunteers from the High Commission territories of Basutoland, Bechuanaland and Swaziland had run dry so that recruiting authorities simply had to turn their attentions to East and West Africa.

However, East Africa still had military commitments elsewhere. Gondar did not fall until November 1941. Then the KAR had the task of providing a military presence to safeguard the newly conquered territories. This commitment continued even after the restoration of Haile Selassie in January 1942. When the KAR finally withdrew from Ethiopia in August 1942, 12(African) Division, consisting of two infantry brigades and attached troops, had to remain in occupation of French Somaliland, whose Governor was a strong supporter of vichy.

These considerations indicate that it was a bold project to look to East Africa as a major source of recruits for the AAPC.

The first recruits for the AAPC were drawn from the EAMLS. These men were volunteers who transferred to the new unit and reattested for a longer period of overseas service. This method of recruitment could only be a temporary one because there were no plans to disband the EAMLS entirely, but transfers from the EAMLS provided an experienced nucleus of men to give guidance to the rest of the AAPC recruits drawn from the civilian population. Eventually the transfer of members of the EAMLS to the AAPC was prohibited.

The two units continued to recruit in Kenya, Uganda and Tanganyika until October 1941 when the situation changed. During this period the military authorities came into conflict with other organisations and employers who were also staking a claim upon African manpower. In Kenya, the protests of the white settler farmers were a symptom of their discontent

over a related issue. The African climate made farming a risky business and it was not unusual for a farmer to lose an entire crop if the rains came at the wrong time. Disease too affected plants and animals and a farmer had to take care to guard his stocks from predators. Settler families spanning generations had sunk funds in enterprises which had not always paid off and had sometimes sacrificed a comparatively luxurious life-style in Britain to the hope of one day striking it rich in Africa. For those who had made a profit there was still the threat of financial ruin due to adverse weather conditions or an epidemic of disease among livestock. Those who had sufficient capital to save their farms from natural disasters if the need arose were the envy of those who had devoted their lives to agricultural projects only to see them ruined. The coming of the war was the ideal opportunity for the farming entrepreneur to make money. The armies of an Empire at war would need food and raw materials. Who better to provide them than the Kenyan farmers, who could expand their farms and find new markets for their products backed and sanctioned by official government policy. At the beginning of the war it looked as if such hopes could become a reality when the Governor of Kenya urged that Kenya's part in the Imperial war effort should be one of food production. This was reiterated in the East African Standard which voiced the opinions of white settler farmers.

The white farmers had a further problem which was aggravated once the KAR began to expand. Their employees were of a different culture from their own and had their own attitude

towards physical work. Many Africans regarded agriculture as the task of women who did the back-breaking work tending crops while young boys looked after the animals and the men gossiped, smoked and discussed local business. For those who did not consider it demeaning that a man should do farm work, there was sometimes the attitude that he should only work when his employer was watching him and not when his back was turned. Employers could solve this by paying their men for the amount of work done rather than the number of hours. However some African cultures rated leisure time above money payments and preferred an easy life to working on a settler farm for wages.

Although there were individual employers who built good relationships with individual employees, many Kenyan farmers believed that there was a 'labour problem'. This is illustrated by their continual letters of complaint to the East African Standard about lazy servants, the lack of good farm workers and, most important of all, the problem of competing with army rates of pay in order to attract employees. As the East African campaign drew to a close in 1941, the farmers hoped for a respite from army recruiting so that they could find the labourers to develop their farms more effectively. Ostensibly they were complaining about a labour shortage. In reality they were making the assumption that food production was a priority in Kenya before the government had come round to that idea itself. When the government did come round to that idea, it was not because of the demands of the vociferous settlers but because other sources of food were no longer available. The German U-boats attacking

American cargo ships in the Atlantic prevented supplies reaching Europe. Kenya was asked to provide food for the armies in the Middle East, to relieve the burden on Britain where rationing had been introduced and to reduce the pressure on the dangerous Mediterranean supply route. The food would be mainly meat, canned at Leibigs' factory in Nairobi (where one cow made 110 tins) and transported to the Middle East by sea.

Once food production was an official government priority in Kenya, the white settler farmers stepped up their demands for a better quantity and quality of farm labourers. Clearly, Kenya could not provide extra men for the EAMLS and AAPC as well as unlimited supplies of food and raw materials. In July 1941 a leader in the East African Standard[2] complained that Kenya's resources of men, money and experience were already 'slender' and the war was, as yet, hardly underway. In 1941 a meeting of the Kenya Farmers' Association at Nakuru suggested that pressure should be brought on the government to introduce forced labour. They called on the government of Kenya to inform the African chiefs that their people should support the war effort by coming forward as farm labourers. In response the government took prompt action in recognition of the pressing need for Kenya's raw materials. That same month (October) they suspended recruiting for the EAMLS and the AAPC in Kenya until early in 1942. The military authorities also agreed to suspend the recruiting of drivers for the East African Army Service Corps (EAASC) as soon as certain urgent commitments had been met.

Almost immediately the labour situation improved, suggesting that similar types of Africans were required by both military and civilian employers of labour.

In 1941 Kenya had an estimated population of 550,000 able bodied male Africans. Of these, 221,000 were already in civilian employment and 47,000 in military employment. The total number of able bodied male Africans in paid employment was 268,000, that is about 49 per cent[3]. Many Africans preferred to work their own land and could get a good price for their food in the local markets. Being employed on their own land they did not feature in official employment statistics which tended to mislead those Europeans who knew little about the structure of the African economy. After November 1942, an African who was thought to be working his own land usefully could not be conscripted for military labour service.

The Africans whom neither the military nor the farmer employers wanted were those from very backward areas who were too frightened to leave their homes in time of war or those who preferred a life of apparent leisure to exerting themselves for remuneration.

Kenya was not the only country in East Africa to provide recruits for the EAMLS and AAPC during 1941. By the end of the year the official strength returns for these two units were as follows[4];

	KENYA	UGANDA	TANGANYIKA
AAPC	4700	3800	2900
EAMLS	1200	300	1700
TOTAL	**5900**	**4100**	**4600**

Despite the suspension of recruitment for both units in Kenya during the last few months of 1941, that country still provided the most recruits. Apart from the demands of the military all three territories had to provide 6,000 labourers on six month contracts for the construction of the Thika-Ngomeni railway. In Tanganyika recruitment of labour for the K.U.R.* began in December 1940. Tanganyika's mining industry also required African labourers and it was decided that it should not be disrupted by the war.[5] The other major competitors for Tanganyikan labour were farmers and sisal estate owners. One Tanganyikan farmer wrote to the East African Standard shortly after the suspension of recruiting to the EAMLS and AAPC in Kenya. He claimed to have no difficulties in finding labourers and had turned down applicants for work. He had 200 men from the Belgian mandated territories of Ruanda and Burundi in his employ, as well as Mahiwa from Portuguese East Africa, large numbers of whom had been trekking to Dar Es Salaam in search of work.[6] Kenya did not have the same influx of migrant workers.

Africans native to Tanganyika also came forward for work on the farms and estates, but not as eagerly as the sisal growers might have hoped. The chairman of the Sisal Growers Association, Mr Hitchcock, complained that 50% of Tanganyika's adult males did no work for themselves or for anyone else.

* K.U.R. - Kenya and Uganda Railways and Harbours

The industry was forced to recruit in the Belgian Congo, Portuguese East Africa, Nyasaland and Rhodesia. However the recruiting operations of sisal estate owners in Tanganyika and elsewhere had to be curtailed during 1941 and quotas were fixed to limit sisal production. This gave the KAR and the EAMLS and AAPC a freer rein in Tanganyika. In February 1941 there was a steady flow of men from Ufipa and southern Kigoma to join the KAR. Here quotas were maintained and desertions were few.[7] Meanwhile sisal estate owners had to rely more on local labour, whereas before they had recruited from remoter districts. Most estates coped with a reduced work force by making the men already in their employment work harder.

From January 1942 the balance between military and labour recruitment altered in Tanganyika following the expansion of the Japanese hold in the Far East. Sisal was a good substitute for manila fibre which was now less widely available. Sisal was used for binder twine, camouflage netting, slings and packaging pads for the transport of bombs, shells and ammunition. It was also used to make dart boards for the troops! In January 1942 sisal became an official priority and all restrictions on its production were lifted. The American government offered to buy all Tanganyika's surplus sisal for use in the Far East.

Although labour problems were less acute in Tanganyika than in Kenya, measures were taken to safeguard the production of sisal. Unfortunately for the manpower situation, extra demands for military labourers coincided with an increased

demand for native crops and an increased demand for sisal. Traditionally, most labourers for Tanganyika's European farms in the Northern province, came from the Central Province. By November 1942 however, Africans could get more money from selling their own crops than by working on European farms. As in Kenya, an African working his own land usefully was exempted from military or labour conscription. Also in Tanganyika, Africans employed on European-owned estates were exempted from military labour service, but there was no suspension of military labour recruitment in Tanganyika as there was in Kenya. This was because the AAPC and EAMLS had not made such stringent demands on Tanganyika during 1941.

Another claim on African labour in Tanganyika arose after February 1942. The loss of rubber producing territories to Japan in the Far East meant that Tanganyika's wild rubber had once again to be utilised. This led to little conflict with other competitors for labour since the task of rubber tapping was mainly allocated to the Gogo, a tribe considered too primitive to perform any other task with efficiency. The Gogo were from the traditional recruiting ground for agricultural labourers, the Central Province, but they were thought to have a 'congenial lack of initiative'[8] which suited them for rubber tapping. The KAR showed no interest in recruiting them.

In Uganda there was even less conflict between military and labour recruitment. In comparison to Kenya the number of settler farms was small and the difficulty of exporting

Uganda's main agricultural crop, cotton, meant a fall in prices and less demand for African cotton workers. Uganda had alluvial gold and copper mines but not of significance. As in Tanganyika, Uganda's sources of wild rubber were tapped and there was a demand for food. However, in 1943 famine measures were necessary in Uganda because of the failure of the maize crop, a staple food, owing to drought and a plague of locusts.[9] Coffee was also an important cash crop in Uganda but it was not in sufficient demand for it to become an official priority, over-riding recruitment to the armed forces. In fact, the rivalry between military and labour recruitment in Kenya, and to a lesser extent in Tanganyika, was brought about when the government intervened and made Kenyan food and Tanganyikan sisal, official priorities. As a result, certain restrictions were placed on military recruiting.

In Nyasaland, the fourth of the countries where the KAR recruited, there was initially no recruitment to the AAPC or the EAMLS. This was in spite of the offer of Sir Donald Kennedy, Governor of Nyasaland to raise two pioneer battalions immediately in January 1941. Speaking at the Governors' conference, he explained that he was shortly to meet with the South African Gold Producers' Committee to discuss the re-opening of labour outlets to the Union and Southern Rhodesia.[10] If his offer of pioneers was to be accepted this would affect his attitude at the talks with the gold producers. He had already made concessions to the mine owners by offering to replace the pioneer units

which had previously been raised on the mines. At the beginning of 1941 there was no manpower problem in Nyasaland and its Governor could offer recruits to the military authorities. It was a false situation because labour outlets to the mines were restricted. A year later further steps were taken to limit the access of Nyasas to this alternative employment when the Witwatersrand Native Labour Association had to accept a reduced quota of 8,500 men. On the strength of this, the Governor of Nyasaland was able to offer further garrison and ancillary troops.[11] Nyasaland also provided many of the 15,000 strong work force which mined the Lupa gold fields in the southern highlands of Tanganyika.

In Nyasaland alternatives to the KAR were more lucrative and it was necessary to curb the activities of the labour recruiters in order to encourage more men into the KAR. In the territories of Kenya and Tanganyika, the opposite situation prevailed and restrictions had to be placed on military recruitment.

Any assessment of the extent to which Africans preferred one form of employment to another must take into account whether they really had a choice in the matter. Since 1940 conscription had existed in a disguised form. The Defence (Native Personnel) Regulations 1940 gave the Governors of the East African Territories the right to enforce quotas through the District Commissioners. According to the quota system each selected area had to supply a certain number of men. Enforced quotas for the EAMLS and AAPC did not

contravene the International Forced Labour Convention because of the military nature of the work. In practice the quota system left the task of choosing 'conscripts' to the chiefs who made up the quotas and the British could fend off any accusations of 'unlimited conscription' on their part. It was also possible to claim that the Africans who came forward were volunteers even if they had been pressurised by their chiefs. The quantity of the recruits depended very much on the power of their chief to compel men to come forward or, if compulsion proved unnecessary, to persuade sufficient men of healthy physique to stay behind. Quotas were exceeded as often as not and if one area failed to meet its quota, the surplus could be made up elsewhere. By spreading the load between the East African territories it was possible to avoid concentrated recruitment in any one place. Initially, it would appear that the quota system did provide sufficient volunteers with a genuine desire to belong to the KAR. If there had been a strong element of compulsion in the system, it would also have been used to supply labourers for the non native farms and estates of Kenya and Tanganyika. As it was, conscript labour had to be used for the farms, and it came under increasing criticism from Labour M.P.s at Westminster. In 1940 Hitler's plans to conscript British males for labour in the Baltic were thwarted by the RAF victory in the Battle of Britain. Forward thinking socialists might have drawn parallels between the two areas of conscription. Anti-British propagandists could accuse the British of hypocrisy in claiming to be the enemy of facism. Such views were voiced even if they were not widely held.

In the summer of 1942, Labour M.P., Mr Sorenson,[12] questioned Harold Macmillan, Under Secretary of State for the Colonies, on the topic of native conscript labour. Macmillan defended the current situation, stating that conscript labour had only been approved in Kenya, Tanganyika, Zanzibar, Northern Rhodesia, Nigeria and Malta. In the 1940s, Hitler did not have the monopoly on racialist philosophy. After all, it was argued, the Jews were white. The majority view in Britain was that Hitler's treatment of Jews could not be compared to British treatment of Blacks in Africa.

In Tanganyika, sisal producers sought to justify labour conscription by war time necessity. Mr Creech-Jones, Labour M.P. for Shipley, Yorkshire,[13] was informed by the Colonial Under-Secretary that recruitment to the Pioneers and Transport Corps was temporarily suspended in 1942, to avoid competition with the programme of increased production for war purposes. This made it simpler to find civilian labourers and intense labour conscription could be avoided. The measure stemmed the rising tide of adverse criticism against conscript labour in the British colonies and indicated quite clearly that Africans preferred military service to work on the estates and settler farms. When they had a choice Africans opted for a branch of the KAR.

In 1941, an official report claimed:

'No difficulty has been found in providing natives for military service. The more adventurous are only too keen to join the fighting forces, while the attractive

conditions offered by the EAMLS, have, in some areas, very largely resulted in the avoidance of conscription for this service.'[14]

The Report argued that the best men went to the EAMLS, not the farms and that if full military conscription had been employed instead of the present quota system supplying volunteers, then some of the better workers might have missed being conscripted and could have worked on the farms. The military had the first choice of the best men and the African chiefs had few problems in fulfilling their quotas.

A monthly quota system was in force in 1941. The Governors of the territories from which the recruits were drawn, hoped to provide the following quotas for that year;[15]

1941	KENYA	UGANDA	TANGANYIKA
January	1000	1600	1750
February	1000	1600	2000
March		2000	2000
April		2000	2000
May		2000	2000

These figures refer specifically to recruits for the EAMLS and AAPC. Their training was to be carried out locally and then the men were sent to the Middle East as units, not as drafts, where they were used as Company sub-units within a British unit, such as the Royal Army Service Corps, in order to dilute European manpower.

The term 'labourer' was emphasised as opposed to 'carrier' as many Africans recalled the sufferings of the Carrier

Corps in the First World War. The issuing of a uniform helped to overcome this problem. Recruits to the AAPC learnt rifle drill, bayonet practice and bomb throwing, just as the combatant troops of the KAR infantry. These conditions helped to increase the popularity of the military labour units. In 1941, the attractions of the Pioneers had not waned. The Governor of Uganda, Sir Philip Mitchell, was confident that he could recruit Ganda to a new Uganda garrison battalion. The Kingdom of Buganda was not one of the traditional recruiting areas. In the opinion of recruiting officers the Ganda were classified as lazy, semi educated, soft stomached banana eaters. At this stage they could afford to turn down Mitchell's offer, despite his protestations that the 'wrong type' of Ganda had enlisted at the beginning of the war, thus creating a misleading impression of their capabilities and attitude. In 1941 they were superflous to recruiting requirements because the traditionally martial people were still coming forward in sufficient numbers. There were roughly 200 Ganda in 8999 Company, one of the first Pioneer Companies raised in Uganda. The rest of that Company came from Ankole.[16] The GOCEA (General Officer Commanding East African Troops) believed that it was not necessary to recruit further in Buganda because it was possible to get so many men 'about whom there were no doubts'. This seemed to be borne out by the Governor of Tanganyika, speaking at the Governors' Conference in Nairobi in January 1941. He reported that unless he was given orders to raise another battalion, he would have to reduce his monthly intake of men from 230 a month to 100 a month. Although these

Tanganyikan volunteers had come forward as combatants, the Governor offered to transfer the surplus to the Labour Service.[17] The conclusion of the Conference was justifiably optimistic regarding the popularity of the KAR and its labour units.

In contrast, an incident in Central Kavirondo in 1942, shows the reluctance of Africans to do roadwork for the civil authority. The chiefs of this part of Western Kenya, produced the 200 men required but when a District Officer questioned them as to whether they were volunteers he found himself addressing only 125 men. Another 75 went home on being asked if they were volunteers, and the remaining 50, who claimed they wanted to work, changed their minds and went home after being taken to Kisumu in lorries.

The chiefs in Central Kavirondo wielded enough power to produce labourers for the civil authority but, unlike their military counterparts, genuine volunteers were hard to find. Similarly, the suspension of recruitment to the EAMLS and AAPC in Kenya, early in 1942, indicated African preference for well-paid military service as opposed to agricultural labour but as a result of that suspension the situation on the Kenyan farms improved temporarily.

However, in April 1942, Middle East Command stepped up its demands for East African manpower. The chief secretary to the Governors' Conference informed the Secretary of State for the Colonies that East Africa Command was now being asked to provide a further 18 companies of pioneers for garrison duties and a further 3 companies of cooks and

servants. The situation in North Africa had become more desperate because of the withdrawal of Australian troops due to the Japanese entry to the war and Africans were needed to release as many Whites as possible for the fighting units. In North Africa the role of the Pioneers became increasingly significant, and although they were not technically combatant troops Middle East Command saw fit to adopt a wide interpretation of their duties. There was no possibility of immediate reinforcements of white South Africans and the loss of a whole division of South Africans at Tobruk exacerbated the problem.

The Japanese advance in the Far East had many implications in East Africa, not least the threat of Japanese submarines to the East coast. Demands for Africans to serve in North Africa coincided with an increased need to fortify and defend the coastline. By May 1942 Mombasa had been partially evacuated and plans were prepared in case such measures were necessary in Dar es Salaam.[18] The townsfolk there had already been involved in air raid precautions and practice blackouts. Civil defence plans became more important with the imminent danger of Japanese planes from aircraft carriers in the Indian Ocean. In Kenya it was decided to widen the scope of the Defence Forces to incorporate both 'native and non-native personnel'. Provision for non-whites was made in the 1st and 2nd Auxiliary Defence Force Battalions which would be called upon to defend Nairobi in an emergency.[19] This allowed a kind of African Home Guard to be attached to the Kenya Defence Force, which had previously been for those of European descent only. Regular units, such as

the Kenya Coast Defence Battery, continued to train and expand. At the time of the fall of Singapore, African scouts were raised as coast irregulars from the Songea area of Tanganyika.[20] Their knowledge of the East African bush was considered important when Japanese invasion of the East coast seemed possible.

As more Africans were recruited for service within East Africa and in the Middle East, the authorities drew their recruits from a wider field. An official report read;

'Tribes which have not been called upon to any great extend should now be required to provide a proportion of the requirements.'[21]

This aggravated the labour problems on the farms in Kenya and on the sisal estates in both Kenya and Tanganyika. In 1942 pressure from the white settlers finally persuaded the government to allow labour conscription. Although this arrangement helped the farmers, it also had an adverse effect on the labour supply as volunteer labourers handed in their notice in order to return to the reserves and look after the homes and families of relatives who had been conscripted.[22] The threat of conscription did cause a rapid increase in those seeking voluntary employment. These measures affected military and military labour recruitment and the KAR had to be satisfied with a smaller proportion of men from the traditional areas. A British officer with the pioneers in North Africa recalled;

'After the fall of Tobruk (June 1942) the KAR was expanding enormously and accepting recruits from tribes which were regarded as unsuitable in the old days.'[23]

There was a deliberate policy of recruiting in new areas for the pioneers so as not to rival the KAR infantry in the traditional areas.[24] For example, the Toro, Teso, Soga and Gwere of Uganda were recruited to the pioneers, as were some Ganda. In Kenya the majority of pioneers came from Nyanza province, an area which did not usually supply farm labour either. This raises suspicions that the Kenyan employers of farm labour exaggerated their difficulties in finding good workers because of the rival attractions of the military. In Tanganyika, a number of recruits came from the Arusha area near Mount Meru. They were members of the Rusha tribe, a branch of the Masai.[25]

The Chief Secretary to the Governors' Conference described the tribal composition of a Ugandan Company of the EAMLS;

'The company is made up of Bateso, Batoro, Basoga and Bagwere. These tribes took some time to accustom themselves to conditions in the Western Desert at this time of year. They required very careful handling and Major Badger's experience in Uganda was of invaluable assistance. At Tobruk they experienced bitter cold and sandstorms. They were employed alongside an RAF unit and made rapid progress, culminating in a bomb loading record!'[26]

The widening scope of recruitment is illustrated in the enlistment of men who needed careful handling. Africans

from the traditionally martial tribes would have been more predictable to the British officers. They would have been in less need of supervision by a man with local experience who 'knew the African'.

In some quarters it was felt that Kenya had supplied more than its fair share of recruits for the armed services. A leading article in the East African Standard[27] pointed out that Kenya had already provided approximately half of the East African manpower for military service and military labour units. It was certainly correct that Kenya had provided the largest proportion of men for the AAPC but not more than half.[28] The article urged the Kenyan government to put pressure on the military authorities to expand their recruiting in Uganda and Tanganyika. Once again the Kenyan settler farmers were making their concerns known with the hope of an improved labour situation.

In the meantime, Middle East Command kept up a constant demand and men had to be kitted out and trained quickly. The proposed strength of the AAPC for June 30th 1942 amounted to an African establishment of 48 companies of 400 men each, a total of 19,200 men. This took into account reinforcements for the next six months. The quotas settled in April 1942 were:

Kenya	6,050
Tanganyika	5,100
Uganda	7,400
	18,550

These quotas were 650 short of the target 19,200 men. The Director of Pioneers and Labour, Lieutenant Colonel E. Brooke Anderson, suggested that Tanganyika should take up this deficiency and also take over the Uganda draft of 600 men for the month of May, to equalise the quotas, approximately, between the territories.[29] This would be a slight concession to Kenyan protests. Nevertheless, the expansion of the labour units for service in North Africa continued in Kenya with no redress for the previous imbalance of recruitment between the territories.

Plans were also made in 1942, by Brooke Anderson, for an EAMLS reserve in case large numbers of labourers were needed at short notice in an emergency. These would be drawn from retired members of the EAMLS rather than from 'raw material' and District Commissioners in Kenya, Uganda and Tanganyika were asked to prepare lists of all ex-EAMLS in their districts.[30]

Another major change in recruiting came about in 1942 when Government ordinances subjected Africans to conscription for the Pioneers and Military Labour Service. In August a conference at Cairo discussed the recruitment of West and East Africans for service in the Middle East.[31] The following month an African manpower conference was held in Nairobi to discuss methods of conscripting the projected 100,000 recruits needed by the end of 1943 in the Middle East.

Once again, military requirements had a 'knock on' effect on East African agriculture. In Bukoba province, Tanganyika,

young men welcomed the chance of well paid service in the army because it freed them from obligations to work on the family shamba. In particular this influenced coffee production in the province. The Provincial Commissioner, E.K. Lumley, sought to readjust this balance and investigated cases where chiefs, sub-chiefs and village headmen had taken the opportunity to put forward men they disliked for conscription. Lumley set up an unofficial tribunal for those who thought they or their sons had been unjustly treated. The military authorities devolved the task of conscription to the Native authorities but the civil authorities reassumed some responsibility and returned several conscripts to their homes. Lumley describes a typical case;

'A father had been conscripted along with his son, leaving the mother alone to look after the shamba. I released them both. It was my policy to see that at least one son remained with the father on the shamba. If the father were dead, then two sons at least had to stay at home'.[32]

In Uganda, more care was taken that recruits for the army came from the less productive areas, especially the West Nile, but it was still difficult to resolve the conflict between military recruitment and the production of essential products; sugar, sisal and timber. The introduction of conscription to the AAPC and EAMLS aggravated the problem in 1942. It was also necessary to produce food supplies for the migrant workers on the estates and therefore important

not to strip the country of the manpower it needed for this purpose.

Young men who were allocated to the production of food or other important crops may have envied their brothers who returned on army leave, fit, well fed, smartly kitted out and with money in their pockets. In October 1942, an article in the Tanganyika Standard proclaimed; 'Africans Enjoy Life in the Army'. Tanga district had provided twice the number of recruits required of it and had only had to use conscription earlier in the year. Men returning on leave loudly praised army food and conditions. In the Lake Province, Tanganyika, the Provincial Commissioner claimed that the soldiers' air of pride in their units had encouraged several more men to join the Pioneers.

The dangers which askaris in North Africa faced were not necessarily a good advertisement for army life, and much depended on the attitude of the audience. As in any society, there were those who yearned for excitement and those who preferred a quiet life.

The work of the AAPC and EAMLS in the Middle East was rigorous and varied. William Wilberforce Nadiope, (later Sir William), son of the paramount chief of the Kamolin and from the Soga tribe of Uganda, completed his education in England in 1939. Immediately he became a sergeant and saw service with the pioneers at Tobruk. Although not apparently awholly reliable witness because of his tendency to exaggerate, he was firmly of the belief that the Pioneer Corps were subjected to greater danger than the KAR. Only the

dangers of the Burma war, he claimed with hindsight, matched those faced by the pioneers in North Africa.[33]

One task of the Pioneer Corps was to build a railway in the Western Desert. When Rommel attacked on 26th May 1942, lorries were sent to evacuate these pioneers. As they retreated eastwards they met the guards brigade and withdrew through its front line. Then they met with a German Panzer division and some were taken prisoner and sent to prisoner of war camps in Germany. Eventually, at the end of the war, these Africans ended up in High Wycombe.[34]

The Base Depot of the Pioneer Corps at Quassassin was only 100 miles from the German line at El Alamein. Here supplies were built up for the Allied offensive. The work of the Pioneers also involved shifting bombs and ammunition. They formed garrison companies for guarding vital installations and so released European troops, which was considered one of their most vital functions. They helped the Royal Engineers to build the railway for the 8th Army and were employed to dig the second defence line behind El Alamein, in June 1942, after the fall of Tobruk. The AAPC also worked alongside the Royal Engineers in laying mines, fortifying gun positions, guarding ordnance depots and hospitals, guarding the underground telephone exchange north of Suez and the docks and petrol refinery station in Suez. There was no reliable local labour and so East and West Africans were considered the obvious choice and they were far more amenable than Egyptians or Arabs.

Pioneers were issued with rifles, bayonets and ammunition, mainly those previously captured from the Italians, and they were given rifle training and drill. If a labour company changed status to become a garrison company, troops did a month's intensive training in guard duties and drill. For example, 8999 Company from Uganda underwent this training before moving to Cairo to guard about twenty different military installations from sabotage. Feeding the Company was awkward because the men were scattered all over the city. The problem was solved by the introduction of a 'meals on wheels' system. A well-fed askari was more likely to carry out his duties efficiently. A British officer with 8999 Company, recorded;

'Here and there, of course, individuals failed to come up to the mark, and an odd sentry would be found asleep or unalert at his post, but I doubt whether troops of any other race or colour would have achieved a much better record at this job in the same conditions.'[35]

The same Company moved to Kantara in July 1943, on the Sinai side of Suez where they guarded military installations and a big ammunition dump in the middle of the Sinai desert. The work of these askaris was arduous and undertaken in adverse conditions and it is to their credit that they were nicknamed the 'smilers' by the South Africans who, for some of the campaign, served alongside them.

Good morale was essential for maintaining the quality and quantity of recruits. East Africa Command and the Governors' Conference firmly resisted the employment of East Africans

in what were termed dilution roles. African Pioneer companies were to be kept intact and not divided into drafts to dilute European units. This role would be reserved for troops from the High Commission territories of Bechuanaland, Basutoland and Swaziland. East African units were not broken up in this way because of the problem of language and communication. The diversity of African languages within the AAPC was enough for the European officers to cope with through the medium of Kiswahili. This was also the reason why Europeans with experience of East Africa were preferred to command AAPC companies. This policy was designed to minimise the feelings of bewilderment of the African askari on travelling so far from his home. He was often among strangers when with other East Africans but he would feel more of an alien if employed in a dilution role, taking orders from unfamiliar officers. In one pioneer company only five out of 350 Africans spoke English; the African Company Sergeant Major (CSM) from Uganda, two clerks from Nyasaland and two medical orderlies from Kenya.[36] These five men could be effective as translators provided their company was not dispersed.

A welfare fund was set up with the assistance of Middle East Command. Each territory (Kenya, Uganda and Tanganyika) contributed £1,000 a month. The fund provided extras to normal rations and looked into matters such as entertainments and newspapers. Rations provided by the AAPC and EAMLS included maize meal, maize beer, meat, vegetables, bully beef and cigarettes. Each company had six or seven cooks from within its ranks. In some companies food caused problems.

D.H. Barber, a British Officer with the pioneers, complained that the food was mainly 'mealie meal' and second grade meat - nearly all fat. Apart from grievances relating to the quality of food, some Africans objected to certain foods because of tribal custom. For example, the people of Ankole would not eat the flesh of any small animal such as pig or sheep. An attempt was made by Barber to replace the mutton issue with some alternative meat but as the Nyankoli were said to have objected on tribal rather than religious grounds, their protest was ignored by the Commanding Officer. Other pioneers were more satisfied. One group, camped near to Indian troops, asked for curry. The request was granted and the curried stew proved so popular that it was adopted permanently as the main meal each day.[37]

Lieutenant Colonel E. Brooke Anderson suggested that visits by East African officials would help keep up the morale of the pioneers. In May 1942, Mr Fazan, Provincial Commissioner of Kenya's Nyanza province, from which many pioneers originated, was despatched to North Africa. Fazan's report of 28 May 1942[38] shows that many pioneers were very fit and were putting on weight. Their main concerns were domestic ones such as unfaithful wives, neglected huts and a lack of letters from home. One British officer had foolishly posted a notice advising the curtailment of family remittances if a man did not receive any acknowledgement of his letters from his wife. This action worried Fazan who reported;

'We have always regarded the family remittance as our best recruiting agent.'

Many African wives could not write and their lack of communication aroused distrust in some British officers. However, as Fazan pointed out, discontinuing payments to wives or other dependent females could cause hardship and distress on the home front. Such remittances had been part of the agreement between civil and military authorities when the service of the East African Auxiliary Pioneer Corps in the Middle East, was first broached. The military authorities were aware that stoppages of remittances could give the wrong impression back in East Africa and have an adverse effect on future recruitment. The welfare fund for Africans serving with the pioneers in North Africa, was also set up with the view of encouraging letters home and safeguarding the payment of family remittances. As for the civil authority, they wanted some kind of guarantee that army wives and soldiers' families would be provided for out of army funds and not left unsupported.

Fazan's visit to the Middle East was reported in the East African Standard which emphasised the chief grievance of the askaris, that they did not receive enough letters from home. The East African Standard said that askaris needed home contact and that many letters never reached them because they were illegible or badly addressed. This problem was tackled a few months later when a free letters scheme was inaugurated. Schools, missions and district commissioners received the 100,000 printed letter forms for distribution to soldiers' families in Kenya. It was hoped that the scheme would extend to Uganda and Tanganyika. The free letter scheme was also useful for those askaris who had recently

embarked for Ceylon, official news of which was received by the press in May 1942.

'Already East African natives are employed in the Western Desert and the latest announcement will encourage the forces throughout the whole command in the knowledge that, from their ranks, men are being called to new responsibilities.'[39]

Recruiting was a continual process and matters of welfare were very important if Africans were to accept the new responsibilities of serving, for the first time, outside the continent of Africa.

Fazan's second main concern was that of leave for the troops in North Africa, especially home leave. Not only would this boost the morale of men already in service, it would also provide visual evidence to potential recruits back home that enrolment in the pioneers could be survived and might even be enjoyed. Unfortunately, some EAMLS personnel who had transferred to the pioneers before leaving East Africa had been away from their homes for 18 months. Most men had been in service for 6 months without home leave. Rumours about the cancellation of all leave spread panic through the African ranks. Fazan believed this problem would be resolved when the first group of men were granted leave and then returned. This would placate the askaris already in service, dispel rumours and might encourage recruitment. Regarding this last point the authorities did not always have cause to be optimistic. Back in 1940, in Ujiji,

Tanganyika, KAR men on leave thrilled large crowds with their stories of army life but were so imaginative that young men in the audiences vowed never to join![40] The pioneers were entitled to leave after two years service in the Middle East and D.H. Barber's platoon went home to Uganda. The African N.C.Os were not so lucky. They were in short supply in the Middle East and their names were taken off the leave list. Many of them tried to get reduced to the ranks in consequence. Home leave was obviously a priority if troops were to remain in reasonably good spirits.

Early in 1943 the first 400 askaris of the APPC to get home leave were given a special welcome at their port of disembarkation in Kenya. Here they were greeted by chiefs of Kenya, Uganda and Tanganyika, including the Katikiro of Buganda. Their arrival was reported by the East African Standard[41] which appealed once again, on behalf of the askaris, for more letters from home. Although the readership of the newspaper was largely European, those who had contact with soldiers' families might help with the writing and correct addressing of mail.

Middle East Welfare also stretched to sponsoring tours of the Middle East by African chiefs. This was one way of getting home news direct to the askaris. In February, six chiefs representing all three East African territories with soldiers in the Middle East, went north to tour from Libya to Palestine. From Uganda came the Katikiro of Buganda, Enosi, Ejok of Teso and Amoth, Owira of Central Kavirondo; all areas from which many pioneer recruits were drawn. From Kenya came

Kasina, Ndoo of Kitui and from Tanganyika Mtemi Bele Masanja of Nera and Abdiel Shangali of Machame. The chiefs commented on the improved physique of their people and heard the praise which many British officers gave for their African troops. The Kenyan chief, the Ndoo of Kitui, had been a Regimental Sergeant Major in World War One, with 1/3 KAR and 2/6KAR, and displayed a chestful of medals. Once more the askaris made a plea for more letters from home and this was some time after the free letters scheme had been introduced. The scheme had only had a limited success.

The two Tanganyikan chiefs were photographed for the Tanganyikan Standard, chatting informally to two askaris. Mtemi Balele Masanja was from the Lake Province and represented the Sukuma among other tribes. Mangi Abdiel Shangali represented peoples of the Northern Province, including the Chagga. On their return to Dar es Salaam the latter chief addressed Africans in the city, stressing the favourable treatment of African askaris in the Middle East.[42] It was the task of the native authorities to enforce conscription and produce quotas and the attitude of the chiefs probably reflected their own interest in this direction.

There were problems in finding men of suitable temperament and physique for the pioneers. This unit was never so popular as the KAR regular infantry battalions. It was still too often associated with the Carrier Corps which had suffered such terrible casualties in World War One without the status and recognition of a uniformed unit. Among the first intake of recruits to 7KAR, an infantry battalion,

were five men who deserted because they had been issued with khaki instead of blue puttees and they thought they were being tricked into the Carrier Corps.[43] Attempts were made to improve the appeal of the pioneers by issuing a uniform and dropping the derogatory term 'carrier'. Nevertheless, it became necessary to conscript a number of pioneers and the quality of recruits dropped. The chiefs found their task more difficult and began to send more men who were physically unfit for labour. The able bodied men still in civilian life were needed for the production of food or were working on the expatriate-owned estates. The chiefs would need to keep some fit people to run the local community and by 1943 there were not so many fit men available outside the army. Disquieting facts were revealed about African health by labour conscription and military recruitment. The Annual Report of the Tanganyikan Medical Department showed concern in this field. Malnutrition was fairly widespread and bad diet caused poor eyesight, a common reason for a potential recruit to be turned away. It was a sad reflection on colonialism that the subject peoples' health only became a matter of concern when large numbers of physically fit labourers and soldiers were needed.

In addition to the problem of unfit recruits was that of desertion and indiscipline. There were difficulties in controlling large numbers of conscripts, back from leave, waiting to embark at Lindi in Tanganyika. On two occasions at least, there were problems in getting the men on board ship. In Bukoba province, Tanganyika, where conscripts had to await the boat across Lake Victoria for Mwanza, desertions were

common.[44] Conscripts on leave also frequently sold articles of uniform for beer money. The poor standard of recruits in Bukoba was attributed to the weakness of the chiefs in that province and to the fact that certain coffee growers had bribed the chiefs not to send their workers. Among the peoples of Bukoba were the Haya who were banana eaters and thought to be similar to the Ganda of Uganda in temperament; 'barrack room lawyer' types. The Wenye were caught between the civil and military authorities and the wishes of their own people. They chose to send very young men who were unmarried in order to avoid the responsibility of looking after wives and children. The chiefs in Tanganyika were the inheritors of Cameron's policy of indirect rule and might have welcomed the assistance of a British recruiting sergeant to take away the odium of the unpopular task of providing quotas. The civil authorities responsible for these conscripts on leave soon learnt the wisdom of spreading a man's ration money over the period of leave rather than giving it to him in advance, to squander on beer. Conscripts had a different status to regulars and a good conduct record was of no interest to them as they automatically received a gratuity at the end of their service. In Dar es Salaam all the bars were closed while the conscripts were in town awaiting embarkation.[45]

Barber[46] recalled in 1943 how, 'Throughout the E.A. pioneer corps, except in certain companies, there had always been a certain amount of disciplinary trouble and the percentage of "crime" had been very high.'

There were some serious discipline problems among the pioneers regardless of whether or not they had been conscripted. Such incidents should not be unduly emphasised, yet in 1942, two platoons of men from Toro actually refused to go to the Western Desert and had to be spoken to by the Area Commander. Even under threat of court martial they persisted in their refusal to go. Then Colonel East King, specially sent from Cairo, came to speak to the men who still remained defiant. The officer directly in charge of the men refused to command them any longer and was transferred to another unit. The rebellious pioneers went unpunished.[47] Such behaviour was widespread at the time of the retreat to El Alamein when it appeared that the Germans were winning. Having built up an unpleasant picture of the Nazis through British propaganda and having been warned of the atrocities the Germans might commit in Africa if they created an Empire there, it was no wonder that the askaris were reluctant to get themselves captured. Their fears on this occasion were natural in view of their otherwise creditable reputation.

All such incidents are liable to different interpretations and none more so than that which had occurred among the ranks of the East African Pioneers at Garba Tula in 1939. During a parade, a large sector of the 1st Battalion refused to do road work and produced a list of grievances including low pay, badly cooked food, poor washing facilities and too much road work. Despite being cautioned by the Commanding Officer, who agreed to look into their complaints, 500 men persisted in their refusal to do road work the following

day. Their officers took disciplinary action, herding the rebels into a wired camp at Isiolo, removing the ringleaders and bringing in 1KAR to divide the rebels into easily manageable groups. A disturbance ensued in which the pioneers rushed the entrance and came into conflict with the KAR, who were armed with sticks. Seventy prisoners suffered head injuries and one man subsequently died.

The main concern of the authorities was not so much to justify the strict disciplinary action meted out to the rebels, or to inquire into the death of one pioneer; it was to make it clear that such disobedience did not represent a more general disaffection in the armed services or the military labour service. Emphasis was placed on the prompt restoration of order, on the loyal action of 1KAR and, paradoxically, on the loyalty of the malcontents themselves. In protesting against their conditions of service they were deemed to be expressing a desire to serve in His Majesty's Forces in a less humble role.

'The desire of the malcontents to play a proper military part is altogether admirable and is in keeping with the regular African forces and those now in their augmented ranks.'[48]

Fears that German propagandists might use this incident to undermine East African morale were unfounded and, apart from the ringleaders, the rebel pioneers returned to their work with no further protests. In future the British authorities planned to mix the tribes within the units so that subversion

was less easy to organise. Blame was attached to the shortage of European personnel, and unsuitability of some of the officers, to the Sudanese N.C.Os who stirred up trouble and to the fact that the askaris all came from one group of peoples, the Kavirondo. At first it was thought that 50% of the malcontents would have to be replaced by degrees but they soon settled down again. It was planned to dilute the Kavirondo with men from other tribal groups in future.[49]

It might have been feared that the incident at Garba Tula would act as a dress rehearsal for more serious trouble among the ranks of the pioneers and the infantry once the KAR and its auxiliary forces began to serve overseas. However, in the event, most protests were isolated and related to specific grievances rather than to the spread of mutinous opinions throughout the forces.

One of the major reasons for dissatisfaction in the African ranks was dislike of foreign service. Many African pioneers experienced a long stretch of foreign service; some were in North Africa for two years without home leave. Contingency plans for Africans to serve outside East Africa itself had been made after the First World War. Traditionally one of the Nyasaland battalions had been stationed in Tanganyika because the League of Nations mandate restricted the use of Tanganyikan askaris. By 1940 the terms of the mandate were given a more liberal interpretation so that Tanganyikan Africans could serve outside Tanganyika 'for the defence of the territory'.[50] Eventually some Tanganyikans defended the Territory by going to Burma.

Tanganyikans and other East Africans demonstrated their dislike of foreign service and their fears of travelling overseas. In March 1942 the 21st East African Brigade went to Ceylon, prior to embarking for Burma. In Ceylon, shortly before 3/6KAR was due to go to Burma, all personal servants of British personnel, were given the choice of enlisting as askaris or being repatriated to Africa. Of the 50 servants, 46 elected to return to East Africa. That so few chose to join up is significant. These servants must have seen something of the jungle training going on in Ceylon in preparation for Burma and had witnessed other aspects of KAR life abroad. They were also aware of the possibility that they might get killed. These reasons were sufficient to deter them from joining the KAR and accepting better pay and status. Instead they went home.[51]

Perhaps they were wise to do so as 3/6KAR went to the Kabaw Valley where one of the four servants who did join up later died in action.

While the 21st East African Brigade was training in Ceylon, the 25th East African Brigade should have set out for Madagascar from Abyssinia but this Brigade defected[52] and had to be replaced by the 22nd East African Brigade, which embarked in May 1942. The 25th Brigade, consisting of 2/3KAR, 2/4KAR and 3/4KAR was a relatively new formation which had seen recent action in the operations against Gondar. It was the last brigade to leave Abyssinia, having stayed on to complete the evacuation of prisoners. The other Brigade involved in the Gondar operations 26(EA)Brigade, had already moved

south. The 25th (EA) Brigade had assumed that they were due for leave in Kenya, but instead they were told to await embarkation overseas. Whether or not their assumption was correct, it is hardly surprising that this news concerned them. One minute they were anticipating a reunion with their wives and families, and the next they faced the prospect of further fighting overseas and the chance of death in action. Casualties in the Abyssinian campaign had been low but there were enough for the fear of death to be a reality to those who survived. The askaris of the 25th(EA) Brigade began to claim that they had joined the KAR solely to defend their homelands and not to fight abroad. By now, knowing something of the importance of written documentation to the European mind, the askari's best tactic was to challenge the validity of his original attestation papers. They demanded the opportunity to volunteer afresh for service abroad, and at the same time, took the opportunity to complain about their pay and lack of home leave.

Although Pioneers received 32/- a month, good pay compared with wages at home and a positive incentive for joining in the first place, the cost of living in Egypt was high. For example, a tin of good boot polish was 4/-, a bottle of beer was 1/-, the 'civvy' cinema was 1/- and a daily paper was 2½d. With 10/- deducted for a wife or relative, the remaining 22/- did not go very far, especially as many Africans had other responsibilities at home such as children in school. Some conscientiously sent as much as another 10/- home.[53] The complaints of 25(EA) Brigade were justified. Fearing a full scale revolt in occupied enemy territory and

with no independent troops to enforce the embarkation of the Brigade, the British wisely backed down and withdrew 25(EA) Brigade from overseas service. They returned to Kenya by road, a mode of transport which was reassuring in the circumstances. On this occasion, a full scale revolt had been organised in a brigade, affecting all three battalions and men of different languages, tribes and areas. All were united in their understandable desire to return home and no doubt they would have continued to prove troublesome if their demands had not been met.

In the Somali units of the KAR this situation was worse and ultimately led to the cancellation of plans to form a third battalion. In April 1942, War Office permission had been sought to raise three infantry battalions in British Somali-land. Somalis had already acquired a reputation of being 'difficult' and it was thought politic to include a Somali battalion in each of the three new brigades then forming within the command. By tradition the Somaliland Camel Corps was diluted with Nyasas to try and curb the rebellious nature of the Somalis. The first of the new battalions, 71(Som)KAR and 72(Som)KAR were placed in brigades of mixed tribes. Desertions began in 71(Som)KAR as soon as the men knew they would leave Somaliland. Later in the war the situation escalated.

The attempt to recruit Somalis in 1942, despite their reputa-tion, shows that the authorities were casting around for new sources of manpower. Recruitment began to prove more difficult in the year when conscription had to be introduced

for the pioneers and the 25th(EA) Brigade refused to serve abroad, at least until leave in Kenya had been granted. Increasingly, the recruiting officers were forced to try new areas and a gradual move away from the traditional areas of recruitment was accompanied by the introduction of new recruiting methods. In July 1942 a military convoy left Nairobi for Tanganyika. It was openly admitted that a sophisticated propaganda operation was being launched, quite different from the recruiting safaris which had sufficed in the 1930s and at the outbreak of war. The need for recruits was now urgent, for reinforcements abroad and as Pioneers in the Middle East. The fear of a Japanese attack on East Africa's ports meant that men were needed to fight on a new front, one which faced east. The new recruiting methods reflected this urgency.

The convoy aimed at appealing to the African's sense of duty and demonstrating the advantages of enlistment. The display was noisy and colourful, with a festival atmosphere designed to attract the local populace away from their day to day tasks and thereby absorb their full attention. The remoter the district, the more successful the ploy. Posters, displays of medals and hat flashes, photographs, films and live talks by British and African personnel were all included. The weapons used by African infantry men - rifles, bren guns, grenades and three inch mortars - were exhibited. Nine African soldiers accompanied the African mobile Propaganda Unit to give first hand accounts of their lives in the army. The treasure trove of materialism presented to the potential recruits had its impact but was more effective when linked

to African faces. The nine Africans represented the KAR infantry, the Pioneers, the Artillery, the Medical Corps, the Signals, the EAMLS and the EAASC. The senior NCO was a Company Sergeant Major in the Signals, a figure of some importance, who, though only 25 years old, had spent 16 years in the army because he was born in the 'lines'. The pioneer was a "Masai"[54] from Arusha. To add further interest, a photographic record of his career was on show, tracing his progress from the day he volunteered at his District Commissioner's office. This record later became available in the form of a glossy booklet of photographs and simple narrative, published by the East African Ministry of Information in Nairobi. The hero was Kisarishu, the title 'A Spear for Freedom'. He was born when Tanganyika was under German rule;

'In Kisarishu's village, the brutality of the German occupation is still remembered.'

Whether or not Tanganyikan Africans had hated the Germans, they were encouraged to do so in future. They were taught to fear a repetition of the German occupation and the Germans were portrayed as monsters who would have no scruples in committing atrocities, particularly against peoples they thought of as racially inferior. This attitude was not just the German prerogative and some propagandists strove to avoid criticisms of German racist policies, fearing that it would backfire on them. Fortunately most of Britain's African subjects in East Africa were more concerned for their material well being itself than about achieving that end through politics. Anti Nazi propaganda frightened the more simple

minded, but it was wordly motives which spurred the majority of recruits. The account of Kisarishu's career in 'A Spear for Freedom' concludes,

'Kisarishu's accounts of army life must have been pleasant, as his brothers followed him into the army.'

New recruits joined the KAR because of the promise of a better life rather than a desire to avenge themselves on the Germans.

The simple emotive appeal of the propaganda booklet 'A Spear for Freedom' is typified by the last page which shows a smart, well fed and upright Kisarishu with rifle and uniform on sentry duty, guarding his own African shores;

'He is soon due for promotion to corporal and, like men from other parts of the Empire, of many creeds, races and tongues, Kisarishu is on active service for His Majesty, King George VI'.

This material would bring tears to the eyes of a British expatriate admiring the ultimate colonial product. However, its school text book English was intended to appeal to the semi-educated and younger men of a village, who sought advancement and a chance to escape the rigid discipline of their elders, albeit for a new type of discipline in the army.
An appeal was made to their spirit of adventure, their materialism and desire to ape the Europeans and their romantic notions about serving the Empire and protecting their homeland.
It did not give them credit for having much intelligence.

However, the emphasis of all the propaganda was on the career

prospects for individuals and the radical changes that the army could make to a man's life. The recruiting campaign was carried to the remoter districts where previously, European contacts had been minimal and where, as a result, there were many who took the claims at their face value and were willing to be convinced of the army's attractions. 'White man's Magic' in the form of two field wireless sets, impressed the local people when their chief was able to talk to them from the other side of the village.

The recruiters were proud of their audio-visual aids, which included an epidiascope, loaned by the Prince of Wales School in Nairobi. Such novelties added to the general spectacle. Film projectors showed war films, such as Dr Guy Johnson's War came to Kenya and With Our African Troops in Action. Charlie Chaplin films proved popular and although not altogether relevant to the business in hand, they drew the large audiences the recruiters wanted in order to present more subtle propaganda. A film about a mongoose killing a snake went down well with African audiences even if they did not always register the intended military allegory.

Songs and popular KAR marches were played on gramophones, as in many other cultures, stirring the listeners to strut in time to the music. Noise travels further than a static exhibition and draws in the curious. As Goebbels had shown in Germany, the individual dissenter could not be heard above the music blaring from the loudspeaker. Military insignia was another useful propaganda weapon and display boards carried every hat badge and flash in the command and all

badges of rank, with their corresponding rates of pay, and the medals which Africans could gain. Last, but not least, the display included an exhibition of an askari's daily rations!

Audiences of up to 3,000 assembled to see the African Mobile Propaganda Unit at the centres it visited in Moshi and the Kilimanjaro region and recruits began to come forward. The Propaganda Unit provided a useful supplement to the recruiting work of the civil officers who retained certain recruiting responsibilities, while being hard pressed by other war time commitments. The civil administration could not find time to explain the difference between the Carrier Corps of World War One, which many Africans recalled with dread, and the better paid EAMLS and AAPC of World War Two.

A Kenyan Provincial Commissioner during the period 1915 to 1918 noted that thousands of Africans served as carriers in the Great war. Many of them died.

'The natives of British East Africa naturally succumbed to the unhealthy climate and strenuous war conditions in German East Africa and the return of our Kikuyu survivors to their homes in the Native Reserve, broken both in health and spirit, was not the least of the tragedies caused by the Great War'.[55]

This was a matter of concern to Africans which the Mobile Propaganda Unit dealt with successfully. The East African Standard concluded;

'The truth in pictures and personal display will prove beyond doubt the most lasting appeal to the peoples of Africa.'[56]

The mobility of the Unit was certainly significant in taking information direct to the people in territories where communications were primitive. In seeking out recruits the Mobile Propaganda Unit 'blazed a trail' through northern Tanganyika and created its own publicity by becoming the talk of the areas it visited.

Propaganda was also spread by mobile cinemas, independently of the African Mobile Propaganda Unit. Commentators gave prominence to the concept of Empire and the two major adversaries, as they saw it, Churchill and Hitler. One of the most popular films showed a British office worker returning from the city to spend the evening digging his allotment. It was hoped that the film would encourage Africans to work harder producing food for the Imperial war effort.

Propaganda also permeated the KAR from within and in June 1942 it was proposed to recruit African schoolmasters for the KAR.[57] They were to train at Jeanes School in Kenya and be posted to battalions as Sergeant Teachers. Their first job was to teach Africans English. Their other task was to pass on the knowledge they had gained as part of their course at Jeanes on topics such as the importance of Madagascar and the danger of the Japanese threat in the Far East. For indoctrination to be successful it had to be constant and to continue when the new recruit had joined the army.

The new style recruiting drives of 1942 were successful, but also very necessary if the KAR was to continue in its rapid rate of expansion. All the infantry and regular KAR soldiers were volunteers and so were all but a few of the pioneers and labourers. This seems evidence enough that recruiting improved following the exertions of the Mobile Propaganda Unit and the mobile cinemas. By May 1942 the KAR had 28 battalions, twenty-one had been added to the original seven. In May 1942, East African Brigades, including northern Rhodesians, were to be deployed as follows:

25 EA Brigade - Mobile defence of Tanganyika

26 EA Brigade - evacuation of Italians from Abyssinia

27 NR Brigade - reconstituted with KAR units to become 27 EA Brigade - Madagascar

28 EA Brigade - blockade of French Somaliland

29 EA Brigade - Somalia and reserved areas of Abyssinia

Two more brigades were formed by the end of 1942 and they left Kenya for service further north. The two original brigades of the Regiment, 21 EA Brigade and 22 EA Brigade, were already in Ceylon.[58]

Such rapid expansion, far beyond the strength of the KAR in the First World War, suggested that a new role was being proposed for the Regiment. This was to play a part in the Madagascar campaign and the reconquest of South East Asia. In 1943 a third phase of recruitment was about to begin.

CHAPTER THREE

The Third Phase of Recruitment 1943 to 1945

The third major recruiting campaign began in 1943 and continued to the end of the war. This operation was intended to meet the specific needs of the Burma war. Fortunately East Africa was in a better position to divert its supply of men in this direction following the surrender of the Italians in 1943. The Middle East was described as a 'drain' on East African manpower by the East African Governors' conference, which was again hoping for a respite from military recruitment in order to concentrate African energies on food production. While Middle East Command turned to West Africa to supply non-combatants for the North African campaign, East Africa was called on to provide soldiers to fight in a new theatre of war, the Far East. By May 1945 there were 46,050 East African troops in Asia.[1] These men were drawn from a variety of East African tribes, some from the traditionally war-like tribes, others from tribes new to the army. There were two main reasons for the changing tribal composition of the KAR. First, the army was being forced to cast its net more widely as the supply of manpower from traditional areas ran low, and second, the nature of the war in Burma created a demand for a new type of soldier.

During the war in Abyssinia, sophisticated equipment was not available. Nor did the Italians defend their positions with great vigour, so that the KAR did not need, or managed

without modern machines of war. The only KAR battalion which could have been described as heavily armed was 1/3KAR, the machine gun battalion. Otherwise, those who fought the Abyssinian campaign were lightly-armed infantry. In barren and desolate territory, the South African Airforce and the 40th South African Armoured Car Squadron provided some back-up for the foot soldiers, who were rapidly covering ground in pursuit of a sometimes elusive and even reluctant enemy. Other mechanised support came from the East African Armoured Car Regiment, which played an important part in the campaign. The East African Armoured Car Regiment recruited Africans from the existing army units or from those training as soldiers, not direct from the civilian population. The Africans employed on armoured cars at this stage, were given the more humble role of batmen or drivers of the second line transport lorries. In time they were employed as gunners.

By 1943 the situation had altered and the role of an askari in the KAR became less restricted. During the North African campaign the distinction between combatant and non-combatant askaris had become blurred. East Africans had proved themselves more capable than had been anticipated. Although some British officers and civilian officials were reluctant to give Africans credit for much intelligence or initiative, the facts of the North African campaign and the urgent requirements of the Burma war forced them to improve their opinion of the askaris' military value. Opposing the Japanese was an entirely new proposition for the KAR and in terms of arms and equipment the askaris were given more responsibility

than they had had earlier in the war. Financial aid from America helped to provide more machine guns, mortars, artillery, wireless sets and motorised transport. It was for this reason that recruiting policy changed and men from the traditionally less war-like areas were selected because their education fitted them for service in roles which were described as "skilled" and were consequently more attractive to them. The "heshima" or prestige of working at tasks previously reserved for Europeans enticed a different type of person into the army. Old prejudices which labelled certain groups as poor soldiers had to be abandoned. New prejudices took their place as more technical roles were envisaged as being suitable for the semi-educated, temperamental and difficult to handle, Ganda and Kikuyu. Before 1943, the Ganda and Kikuyu had been enlisted as drivers and medical orderlies but in that year they were recruited in greater numbers to be signallers, ambulance drivers, machine gunners or members of mortar platoons.

The Armoured Car Regiment was reconstituted as the Kenya Armoured Car Regiment in 1943, and the commanders were forced to recruit greater numbers of Africans to carry out responsible tasks. This worried some officers, worried about undermining white authority or convinced that Africans were completely incompetent. Others altered their attitudes to suit events and saw the so-called "Africanisation" as a form of progress, resulting from the need to disperse white officers more widely throughout the force. For the enlightened, the new recruiting policy made sense, while giving new opportunities to patronise Africans for their limited qualifications and

experience in the European style of warfare. While recognising the need for change the reformers could control its rate and did so more effectively than the reactionary diehards, whose narrow-mindedness would have defended the status quo whatever the cost.

In the Kenya Armoured Car Regiment 'Africanisation' reduced the number of Whites to one per car. In a troop of three armoured cars, one had a wireless and a four man crew, two had three man crews. In each car the car commander was a white officer; driver, gunner and wireless operator were black. Previously, three Europeans had been needed to control one African; now only one European was needed to discipline three Africans. Unwittingly perhaps, the unruly, semi-educated type co-operated with military authorities by accepting what he considered a more dignified and prestigious role in the army. By subtle, psychological if sometimes unconscious means the British found a new group of collaborators to perpetuate wartime colonialism.

The new intake of skilled recruits tended to consist of younger men, direct from army training establishments. Possibly their motivation was defiance of traditions which excluded people of their area from the army. Other enticements were more obvious, such as pay and conditions of service. British propagandists remained familiar with the old African saying;

'You catch more bees with mollasses than you do with vinegar'.

New incentives to attract new recruits were important in

1943. The demand for men now became very heavy indeed; for the Burma war, to garrison the former Italian colonies and for Madagascar. In the Western Desert, even after the campaign there was ended, pioneers were needed and there was still a garrison to be maintained in East Africa itself, particularly in the coastal region. In some areas, such as Acholi in Uganda, chiefs and District Commissioners complained that all the young men had joined the army. Workers were also needed for food production and consequently some areas had to be excluded from recruitment, even to the local defence force or homeguard - for example, in the Kenya sugar plantation areas. However, in February 1943 labour conscription was suspended because the Kenyan producers had diverted their energies from food production to the less labour intensive occupation of growing tea and coffee. In July 1943 it had to be reintroduced for the sisal estates and in November for essential foodstuffs, including coffee-harvesting, which created a seasonal demand for more labour. In 1944 and 1945 labour conscription increased again and was very unpopular in Nyanza. The men of Nyeri and Meru left their homes and hid to avoid it. Wherever possible they opted for the better paid EAMLS until recruiting for that unit stopped. Labour shortages in Kenya at the end of the war were desperate due to the heavy demands of military recruitment.[2]

Altogether five East African infantry brigades served in South East Asia, either independently or as part of the 11th East African Division, which was itself one of the 15 divisions of the 14th army. The 11(EA) Division consisted

of the 21st, 25th and 26th East African Brigades and the Division Protection Battalion; 13 (Ny)Bn. KAR. The 302 East African Field Regiment (artillery) was attached to the 25th Brigade and the 303 East African Light Regiment (artillery) was attached to the 26th Brigade. Altogether the five KAR brigades which served in South East Asia included fourteen KAR battalions. Of these, many were trained in the use of more sophisticated weaponry but many also remained lightly equipped infantry men. In the Burma war casualties were heavy, from disease even more than from fighting. The more training a soldier had received, the less dispensable he was. Those who contributed only a combination of physical strength and obedience were more easily replaced. Thus alongside a policy of providing African askaris with new skills, the authorities recruited men to serve in the infantry and reinforce those battalions as men were killed and wounded or laid low by tropical diseases. Official viewpoints had differed but ultimately it had been decided that Africans would not stand up to the pressures of the sophisticated type of warfare involved in fighting the Germans in Europe. By using Africans in Burma, white troops could be freed to fight elsewhere. Possibly the grand strategists imagined that the vast continent of Africa had an enormous population which could afford to suffer losses in Burma. Malthusian callousness may therefore have triumphed, but in fact there was little choice. The Empire had to be stretched to its limits to face the relentless onslaught of the Japanese on Burma, which could only too easily penetrate to India. At the time it was well within the bounds of probability

that the 'jewel'in the crown' might be lost to Britain.

A further motive for using African troops in Burma was a belief in their resistance to malaria. This resulted in their being sent into the Kabaw valley in mid 1944, an unhealthy and disease-ridden region, where their chances of survival would be better than most Europeans. Field Marshall Sir William Slim, in his history of the Burma war, 'Defeat into Victory', explains how he was told that,

'While East Africans are by no means immune from malaria, they are much more resistant to it than either Europeans or Indians, and when they do develop the disease its attacks are less virulent.'

On the strength of this scientific theory, Slim directed the East Africans to advance into the Kabaw valley. He concluded;

'The African malarial casualties were not light but I doubt if any other of our troops would have kept them as low.'[3]

Bearing in mind the appalling monsoon weather in August and the very thick jungle through which the askaris had to advance to reach the Chindwin River, the high casualties were not surprising.

Nevertheless, it was a misconception to assume that Africans were used to jungle conditions simply because there were jungles in some parts of Africa. Some British officers, who had not travelled widely in Africa ignored its geographical diversity. Those with greater knowledge appreciated

the need for intensive jungle training in Ceylon prior to embarkation for Burma. For example, 4KAR underwent jungle warfare training from the time the battalion reached Ceylon, early in 1942, until August 1944 when it moved to Kazi camp near Chittagong in India. It then moved by rail, steamer and road to Imphal in Eastern Assam, where the advance down the Kabaw valley into Burma started.[4] Other units had a similar period of preparation.

Coverage of the exploits of the KAR in the East African Standard increased markedly after their entry into the Burma War. By this stage more readers would have some knowledge of individuals who might be serving with the Regiment. Although the newspaper was intended mainly for Whites, many had friends or neighbours who were officers, or servants or labourers who had enlisted as askaris. The newspaper reflected and encouraged the interests of its readers by closely following the campaign.

In 1943 the KAR actually made front page news, a rare occurrence in a paper which normally devoted its priority space to news of the war in Europe or the worrying issue of the civil disobedience movement in India, a foretaste of what might come in Africa. On 22 October a photograph of African askaris handling a Bofors gun was included. The writer also explained[5] how the Field Artillery of the East African force was now Africanised, although some N.C.Os and all officers were British. In fact, Africanisation was a deceptive term which implied gradual but real progress. It always had its limitations, more so than Indianisation. As long as

Africans were excluded from higher responsibility, they lacked the opportunity to demonstrate their aptitude for it. Africanisation measured success in European terms and assumed that Africans would aspire to similar goals as European soldiers. In practice many Africans saw more status in possessing countless cattle and wives and they may have seen a well-paid army job as a means to that end. At least the white East African press was giving more credit where it was due, unlike the BBC which had misreported certain incidents in the East African campaign, giving white South Africans credit for East African achievement at Gallo Sidamo after the fall of Addis Ababa.[6]

The Burma war saw changes in the promotion pattern in the KAR because of the shortage of European officers and N.C.Os. There were no commissioned ranks for Africans although Prince Suna and George Mawanda of the Kabaka's family were commissioned as subalterns. During that war the new rank of Warrant Officer Platoon Commander was made available to Africans. The idea was first mooted in 1942 when General Platt pointed out the need for Africans to be given the chance to develop responsibility. The number of white personnel per battalion had increased during the war to 37 officers and 43 other ranks. Platt considered it a 'farce' to have both a British and an African sergeant, particularly when an influx of poor quality N.C.Os arrived from Britain with no experience of commanding Africans. Although Platt expressed reluctance to introduce commissions for Africans, even on a local basis like the subadars and jemadars of the Indian army, he believed the KAR's part in the East African campaign deserved some

reward. The new rank would be junior to an African RSM but senior to a CSM and Platt proposed four per battalion. The Colonial Office agreed that it was;

'A stage towards the granting of commissions if these Africans prove themselves successful as platoon commanders.'[7]

Platt argued that the rank of Warrant Officer Platoon Commander had the advantage of being a gradual step forward, would give senior Africans some advancement and would reduce the number of British personnel. The idea of minimising the number of whites became increasingly important in the Burma campaign.

Nelson Kusambiza, an African journalist, became a Warrant Officer Platoon Commander in 7KAR and is mentioned in Moyse Bartlett's The King's African Rifles for leading a flanking patrol which captured useful documents from the Japanese. After the war he became a labour officer, which is a further indication of his educational standard and of his qualities of character. It is possible that the introduction of this new rank for Africans was part of a deliberate campaign to attract better qualified men into the KAR.

In October 1943 the East African Standard announced the embarkation of another large convoy of Africans for Indian and Ceylon. Some were newly trained and many of the gunners had been specially selected for the artillery because they had done well at school and understood trigonometry and logarithms. Such educated personnel were to be found mainly among the Ganda of Uganda. The majority of the infantry

on this occasion were from the Upper Nile area of Uganda, a traditional recruiting ground, and there was a gunners' battery of the much favoured Nyasas. Recruiting policies led the authorities to look for both educated and uneducated peoples to fulfil specific tasks in the KAR.

The article in the East African Standard of October 22nd 1943, served a useful propaganda purpose in making it clear that a good standard of African recruits was still forthcoming. Simultaneously, it patronised the askaris by drawing attention to the limited standard of their education in mathematics which had provided them a passport to success. Nevertheless, by stressing that to join the army was a genuine achievement for Africans, the British were assured a continuing flow of recruits from new sources, though their tactics relied on the assumption that Africans would measure success in European terms.

Contact and co-operation with the head teachers of government secondary schools for Africans was improved and in Uganda circulars were sent to the schools by the army Education Officers. Potential recruits reported to their District Commissioner on a fixed date and were duly interviewed. In Tanganyika recruiting was also carried out through the Principals of schools. Tests included 'Kim's Game', writing a letter in English or Swahili and simple arithmetic.

In 1944 a major propaganda exercise was launched in Nairobi, where a large scale exhibition was staged. This showed the achievements of the KAR in the war against Japan and demonstrated army vehicles and weapons. Schoolchildren

of all races visited the exhibition which was intended to encourage those about to leave to consider a career in the KAR. The exhibition was also open to the general public. Emphasis was placed on skills which could be acquired in the army and might prove useful in civilian life after the war. The army was portrayed very much as an educational institution and as providing an opportunity for the semi-educated to increase their knowledge. The new units, calling for machine gunners, armoured car drivers and similar occupations appealed to the Ganda in particular for another reason. The N.C.O. posts in the regular KAR infantry were held mainly by men despised by the Ganda as being still primitive. This had been another factor in discouraging the Ganda from enlisting in the infantry. The British officers believed that they would never accept discipline from the Acholi, a generalisation which their belief itself helped to perpetuate. Pay was not significantly higher in the skilled units such as the Signals, but in a new unit of that kind, opportunities for promotion were much better and career prospects had their appeal. During the 1930s and the early 1940s a pattern of promotion had been established in line with the opinions of the time. The men most commonly promoted were the Nubi and Acholi of Uganda, the Kamba, Nandi and Luo of Kenya, the Nyamwezi, Hehe and Chagga of Tanganyika and the Ngoni of Nyasaland. Given responsibility Africans acted with responsibility but this had been generally attributed to their tribal characteristics rather than to their qualities as either individuals or Africans. A Nubi was a good N.C.O. because he was a Nubi and likewise a Ganda was a bad N.C.O.

because he was a Ganda. These ideas were adjusted as different peoples filled the non-commissioned ranks of the newly formed units.

The African Mobile Propaganda Unit continued to tour Uganda, Nyasaland, Kenya and Northern Rhodesia. Constant propaganda was thought necessary to combat the reluctance of the more primitive tribes to leave their homes in time of war. Non-combatants were still required in 1943, when conscription for those units had already been in operation for a year. In southern Tanganyika the authorities had to keep secret the ordering of lorries for the transport of troops, and the Jumbes (village headmen) were given very short notice that non-combatants were to be conscripted so that rumours did not frighten people away. Some young men hid in the huts of those unlikely to be bothered by conscription, such as old people or widows. The Propaganda Unit also sought to encourage hard work and those who were usefully working on their own land were not conscripted for the military labour service. 'Loafers' were checked on constantly and tax defaulters in Dar es Salaam were conscripted as non-combatants. In Tanganyika, in January 1944, the Propaganda Unit staged a major display at the native stadium near Dar es Salaam for 8,000 Africans, mainly civilians. In the physical training display a human pyramid, fifteen feet high, was constructed. The crowd also enjoyed the demonstration of an electric mine detector, operated by a blindfolded askari. The parade of troops was taken by the youngest African CSM in the East African Command, 22 year old CSM Okech, an Acholi who joined the Uganda battalion in 1931

as a bugler, at the age of nine![8]

The expansion of the KAR had, in the opinion of some British officers, reduced its standards of discipline. A proportion of non-combatants also were reluctant conscripts and although combatants were volunteers, some of these had been forced to join up by their chiefs who had to meet the imposed quotas. If the chief was opposed to recruiting because it would deprive his community of younger men, he would deliberately send the old and infirm. Other chiefs used the quota system to get rid of trouble-makers. KAR standards were also thought to have deteriorated because the Regiment no longer recruited solely from the traditionally martial peoples. Brigadier G.H. Cree, who returned to command the 25th East African Brigade in Burma in 1944 after having last served with the KAR in 1941, complained of too many "semi-educated" askaris in the services, their little knowledge being a dangerous thing for those who had to command them.[9]

In South East Asia, the KAR askaris became more aware of their inferior status in comparison with British, Indian and West African Regiments. Rates of pay differed because they related to standards of living in the soldier's country of origin. Consequently, East Africans were paid considerably less than Indians when it appeared that they were doing the same work. In other situations too, their grievances were justified. In Ceylon, where there was no colour bar, some hotel bars were open to those of the rank of Warrant Officer or above. This meant that the African RSMs and CSMs could go into the hotel bars and British Sergeants

and Company Quarter Masters could not. When British NCOs complained, the Africans were banned from the bars and a beer tent was provided for them back at the leave camp.[10] Africanisation, it seemed, was a hollow promise which was not to be effected socially. Africans still had to learn their place, determined on their behalf by the British. This did not mean that their welfare was uncatered for. It was necessary to boost morale when the askaris were so far from home. In 1943 the GOCEA urged a monthly expatriation allowance of five shillings for KAR and RWAFF Africans serving in India, Ceylon and beyond and of two shillings for those serving in North Africa.[11]

Increasedpay did not necessarily improve the performance of the askaris in Burma. Poor morale eroded discipline in spite of expatriation allowances. In November 1944 Brigadier G.H. Cree[12] took up command of the 25th East African Brigade in the Kabaw Valley. Operations there were drawing to an end and the KAR approached the Chindwin River and waited for the 2nd British Division to join them. The leading troops refused to cross the river and form a bridgehead as this was contrary to their original orders to advance to the Chindwin only. A few askaris were encouraged to cross the river at points where they would meet little opposition but the majority remained obdurate. Having endured the difficult conditions of the Kabaw Valley while being relentlessly pushed forward against a wily and determined enemy, their reaction was not surprising. Troops of any nationality might have responded in the same way. However,

an attempt was made to find ringleaders in the face of passive non co-operation from the African N.C.Os. At last the African RSM, a "lone Somali", was able to apprehend a number of men but the punishments inflicted were purely nominal. Brigadier Cree found the whole incident disturbing and he also describes other minor occurrences of a similar kind.

On returning to Assam, the GOCEA was due to inspect the 25th East African Brigade. The tour was organised so that the GOCEA should see the best battalion first and the recalcitrant battalion whose men had refused to cross the Chindwin last. On this occasion the 'best' battalion initially refused to go on parade and the schedule had to be rearranged so that in the meantime they could be persuaded to conform. As well as refusing to parade, groups of Africans in the 11th East African Division, refused to dismiss. Grievances were frequently expressed through mass disobedience and the British officers sometimes found it difficult to discover what specific grievances were. By 1944 many askaris had spent several years away from their homes, either serving in parts of East African unfamiliar to them, or in Abyssinia, North Africa or Madagascar as well as in India and Burma. For those who travelled by sea for the first time, it must have been an exciting but bewildering experience and the new way of life to which they had to adapt was confusing. It was not possible for any troops to be granted home leave from Burma until the war was nearly over. In May 1945 there were 150,344 East African troops in the home command, including a large number of reinforcements and units which were

to be sent complete to South East Asia to carry out a leave exchange scheme.[13] This scheme was too late to combat poor morale effectively, and only served to answer press allegations that the welfare of askaris in South East Asia was not properly catered for. The South East Asia Command Welfare Fund spent about £5,000 a month on facilities for Africans such as canteens, cinemas, beer, reading material and sports gear. In addition, voluntary women's organisations aimed to send each African a parcel a year. News in the form of local papers and newsletters was sent to Nairobi from all the East African territories for distribution to the troops. Circulars were issued asking chiefs and headmen to write personal letters to the askaris giving news about matters of concern such as crops, the weather or cattle. Letters from home were few and far between. After 1944 a Swahili newsheet, Nyumbani, (At Home) was distributed and there were frequent lectures on the course of the war from African Education Sergeants. Throughout the Burma campaign the troops had access to Askari, a weekly Swahili newspaper published by East Africa Command and distributed free to the soldiers. Kenyan Africans also received Kenya Kwetu, (loosely translated as Kenya Back Home), a monthly magazine in Swahili which contained articles on new schools and hospitals, agricultural developments and the marriages of important Africans. It was official policy to encourage contact between Africans and their families and communities rather than between Africans and the local population overseas.[14] The authorities feared the spread of Ceylonese political ideas and the potential reaction in Africa once the askaris returned.

Problems of indiscipline and low morale were typified by the troubles with the Somali infantry battalions. The Somalis had long had a reputation for rebelliousness and by tradition the Somaliland Camel Corps had been diluted with Nyasas. The two Somali infantry battalions formed in 1942 were 71 (Som) KAR and 72(Som) KAR. These battalions were destined to join KAR brigades designated for service in South East Asia. Not surprisingly, desertions in 71(Som) KAR began as soon as the men knew they were to leave Somaliland. In February 1944, 71(Som) KAR sailed for South East Asia. Many of the askaris were very young and were thought by their officers easy prey for so-called older trouble-makers. Twenty-seven men, deemed to be instigators of dissatisfaction were weeded out and transferred to 72(Som) KAR and were then blamed for the heavy desertions which occurred in that battalion when it left Somaliland early in 1944. In September 1944, 72(Som) KAR was posted to Moshi in Tanganyika to function as a reinforcement battalion for 71(Som) KAR, which was by then serving in South East Asia. The same 21 trouble-makers were blamed when 63 men, detailed for draft to 71(Som) KAR, refused to obey orders and instead disappeared into the bush. Although most of the deserters returned to be arrested, the battalion was temporarily disarmed. It was disbanded in February 1945 in line with planned reductions in the establishment of East African troops.[15]

The reaction of the Somali youngsters to the bewildering and frightening prospect of foreign service is understandable. Blame for disruption in the Somali battalions could

be attributed to the defiance and insubordation of certain individuals but it must also be appreciated that by the time of the Burma war, more was being expected of East African troops than ever before. The British Empire was making far greater demands upon its peoples when service outside the African continent was required and the casualty lists in the newspapers were more lengthy.

The fear of serving abroad also caused trouble in the Somaliland Camel Corps when serious rioting broke out on the night of June 5th 1944.[16] Indiscipline at this level caused the British to consider whether there was any loyal element in the Camel Corps. It would seem that Africans would give their loyalty up to certain limits, as is universally true of all but professional soldiers. In expanding into new areas of recruitment, the British faced a serious challenge from men who were not prepared to leave their homelands either for the money or for a sense of duty inspired by British propaganda.

It was not altogether 'Somali treachery' that brought about the failure of the new recruiting exercise to form two Somali infantry battalions. Bad timing was also a factor. If Somali recruits had had the chance to develop military experience, as had the Kamba, Nyamwezi and Acholi, for example, they might have been better prepared, psychologically, to participate in the Burma war. As it was, they were not only new to the army, they were new to manhood and they were new to foreign service. Also, the officers dealing with them were probably nervous of potential subversion,

a fear which their young recruits would have sensed. The attempt to recruit Somalis had to be abandoned because the British blamed the disturbances on the Somalis' characteristics as a racial group. Even the N.C.Os could not be trusted, it was claimed, and they had encouraged and collaborated with the dissidents. What was worse, in the incident with the Camel Corps on the night before 'D' Day, the soldiers not only refused to fight for the British, they seemed likely to turn their guns against the British. Moyse Bartlett wrote of the situation in his King's African Rifles;

'.... about 150 askaris broke into the magazines and armouries at Burao and looted arms and ammunition. Seeing what was occurring, other Somalis in Burao joined the rioters and among the general confusion, equipment, clothing and rations quickly disappeared. A great deal of indiscriminate firing took place but no casualties were reported.

'In the morning, order was gradually restored. Armoured cars were despatched to Odweina for use if needed. Investigation showed that about 140 men were missing, and that 233 rifles, one light machine gun, seven Sten guns and three pistols had disappeared from the magazines. Demands for the surrender of these absentees and arms were made upon the tribes. Some of the men came in, but a fortnight later 69 deserters and 185 rifles were still missing.'[17]

To many this must have looked like revolution. Swift and decisive action had to be taken. The Somali askaris could not be forced into submission when many of the most experienced and loyal battalions of the KAR were already serving

overseas. There was no guarantee that the rebel askaris would reform if they were punished and it was difficult to isolate individual culprits. Thus it was that the Somaliland Camel Corps came to an end. The Somalis who remained in the KAR as members of other units had to live down the doubly confirmed reputation that their people had attained for rebelliousness.

It is often simpler to judge in retrospect the reasons for outbreaks of dissidence when more facts are available, and a variety of viewpoints can be assessed. At the time, the British officers often failed to appreciate the origin of indiscipline and the most appropriate means of punishment. In South East Asia, unco-operative askaris were punished by being sent to load planes in the dangerous forward zone while their comrades were thought to be enjoying themselves, drilling in Assam. The punishment was ineffective because plane loading proved very popular and seemed like a reward for unco-operative behaviour, eminently preferrable to parade ground drill.

It was difficult to predict African reaction to punishments meted out on their fellows. None seems more surprising than that of a firing squad assigned for execution duty in Ceylon. The Chaplain of the 26th East African Brigade, the Reverend J.E. Gregory was aware of the apprehension of those in command as to whether or not the squad would be willing to carry out their task. Gregory spoke to the firing squad before the execution and was surprised at the only question which was raised. Instead of asking the offence

of the accused or why the British required others to do their dirty work, the askaris simply wanted to know if they would have an opportunity to iron their uniforms beforehand![17] Gregory gives no explanation for the matter of fact attitude of the firing squad but it is possible that those to be killed were of a different tribe to that of their executioners and consequently of little concern to them.

In East Africa itself, troops of the home command lined up as reinforcements for Burma, had become less amenable to discipline. In 1944 a review of punishments at the East African Signal Training Centre examined the problem of Africans going absent without leave. Africans returning to their villages and abandoning their army training were liable to have an adverse effect on recruitment. The use of the cane or 'kiboko' was revived as a temporary experiment to replace pay stoppages and detention. For many Africans, corporal punishment was considered more manly but some British officers were hesitant about its use and its ultimate justification in terms of the British presence in Africa. British war aims and British practice in the KAR were contradictory; the Adjutant of the East African Signals Training Centre wrote;

'You cannot talk to a man about fighting for freedom and justice and then deny him both.'[18]

Colonial philosophy argued in favour of paternalism as the means of civilizing the barbaric African. Unless this was done by example, however, paternalism became oppression.

On the other hand, in terms of African preference and perception, the use of the Kiboko was the most appropriate and effective punishment. Before caning had been banned in 1942, many Africans opted for it because it meant they could keep a clean conduct sheet. During the Burma campaign, Lieutenant Colonel G.G. Robson[19] of 3/6KAR used caning on active service, thinking Africans preferred it. However, the African RSM requested that it should be stopped because it was not used by Indian or British Regiments. Robson readily complied.

In the opinion of some officers the British did well to avoid a full scale revolt in the KAR while it served in Burma. It was just as well that the Somaliland Camel Corps never reached the Far East as their attitude and the behaviour resulting from it might have proved infectious. Brigadier G.H. Cree who commanded the 25th East African Brigade in Burma and Assam from 1944 to 1945[20] believed the British were fortunate to get away with a few "minor flare-ups". Differences in conditions of service for Europeans and Africans were marked, Europeans appeared to have better rations and a more liberal alcohol allowance than Africans. There was no promise of loot as there had been in Abyssinia and because they had travelled so far from home, African morale was low. The 22nd East African Brigade first went overseas in May 1942 when they embarked for Madagascar. The effect of the inspiring propaganda speech delivered to them on this adventurous occasion had worn off by the time they reached Colombo in July 1944. By December the Brigade was in Chittagong in India from whence they advanced

to patrol the knife-edged ridges of the Arakan hills. Here they came across thick jungle and dense bamboo which they had not experienced in their training. It is unlikely that many recalled the words of the GOCEA, General Platt, communicated to the troops of all ranks once they had set sail back in May 1942;

'You have earned a high reputation in your actions that resulted in the destruction of the Italian East African Empire. You are now moving to another field of action. Difficult tasks lie ahead of you. In facing these, remember that not one of your homes, not one of your people, will be safe to lead a life of peace and liberty, until the forces of evil are finally subdued. The future of your children depends on you. Go forth, knowing that your cause is right and that the best wishes of all the forces in East Africa accompany you.'[21]

This was small consolation for an askari attacking a 'formidable and fanatical enemy strongly posted in well-armed positions of his own choosing'.[22] The great distance between Burma and Africa would have led some to question whether the peace and liberty of their family was under threat from the Japanese.

On top of these grievances, askaris from the grass uplands of East Africa had to live with the reputation attributed to them by Higher Command of being, 'the finest jungle fighters in the world'. Such proclamations did not frighten the Japanese and only meant that many Africans were bound to fail to measure up to that image. It was not surprising that Africans were thought to have little initiative and

were subject to mass hysteria. They were also criticised for moving too slowly in attack and abandoning positions too readily in defence.

Further problems arose when European officers with no familiarity with Africa, were sent to command African troops. They may have had high expectations of guerilla-type jungle fighters when in reality the Africans found their surroundings as alien as did the Europeans themselves. No doubt those in immediate contact with African troops could become frustrated when their men did not behave in the manner they had been led to expect. Individual askaris too might have felt confused or insulted by the insensitivity of officers unused to relating to Africans. Combined with the appalling conditions in the swamps of the Kabaw valley, the difficulties in transporting equipment without mules (until 1945), the prevalence of malaria and scrub typhus, infrequent contact with home and the fraying patience of British officers forced to push themselves and their men to the limit under the orders of Higher Command, it was no wonder that some blame was attached to troublesome Africans. In fact the majority must have shown endurance, courage and fortitude equal to that of their European commanders. It took a different type of British officer to realise such qualities, often one who had some fore-knowledge of East Africa. Moyse Bartlett commended the Africans of the KAR for their cheerfulness in times of difficulty, their good hearing and eyesight, their ability to lie still for long periods without making a noise and the agility which, he said, made them preferable to Europeans on reconnaissance expeditions, in spite of

their lesser intelligence. General Slim praised the achievement of the 11th East African Division in advancing down the Kabaw during the monsoon, and Lieutenant-Colonel J.R. Carbonell went so far as to pay tribute to the Somali Battalion which did reach Burma;

> 'Awkward they may have been, but fight they did, and what is more to the point, being the ultimate object of infantry, they killed.'[23]

Reinforcements and new formations to serve in South East Asia were in constant demand until Japan was defeated. At the height of the Burma campaign, recruitment in East Africa was stretched to its limits. Casualties were far greater than those previously suffered by the KAR and the weekly casualty lists, published in the East African Standard, filled whole columns. The operation of crossing the Chindwin, for example, cost the 11th East African Division:

26	British ranks killed
95	British ranks wounded
7	British ranks missing
233	African ranks killed
976	African ranks wounded
35	African ranks missing.[24]

Some British officers adopted the habit of blacking their faces because the Japanese marksmen naturally tried to pick off the leaders. The 6th (Uganda) Field Ambulance helped to deal with KAR casualties and in 1944 a Casualty Clearing Post was opened at the 67th mile post on the Tamu-Kalewa road in Burma where casualties were received and evacuated.

The 6th Field Ambulance also provided many other medical units for the numerous casualties suffered by the KAR.[25]

It had been envisaged that one East African infantry division would be maintained in the field, while two East African brigades would provide bulk reinforcements in drafts from platoons to brigades. Reinforcements waited and trained in Ceylon and India before they were despatched to Burma.

In October 1944 the 28(EA) Brigade was called to join the 14th Army in Burma. Soon afterwards the whole of the second reinforcement brigade, 22(EA) Brigade, departed to join the 26(Ind) Division in the Arakan. At this point, South East Asia Command had to be informed that East African reinforcements simply could not maintain five brigades on active service. It was 28(EA) Brigade which was to suffer the heaviest casualties of an East African brigade in battle. There was no one to reinforce the reinforcement brigades and Supreme Allied Command South East Asia had to bear in mind that the role of the 22nd and 28th Brigades was primarily that of relief brigades. East Africa could not provide any more. By 1944 the influx of trained East African soldiers to Burma was slowing up. Despite new drives in recruiting and new propaganda exercises in East Africa, it became increasingly apparent that the supply of fit young Africans was dwindling. In fact recruiters no longer looked for fit men; they assumed that army training would be sufficient to build up the strength of the weaker men they were now forced to recruit. Fewer men were being left at home to work the farms in Kenya and the plantations in Tanganyika.

Short of introducing full scale conscription to replace the quota system, the KAR's recruiting campaigns had almost come to a full stop. Foreign service was unpopular and for those responsible for recruiting for the KAR, the defeat of the Japanese in 1945 came as a particular relief.

Meanwhile, back in East Africa KAR troops were still required to defend Kenya's Northern Frontier District, to hold the conquered territory of Abyssinia and, if need be, to defend the East coast of Kenya and Tanganyika against potential Japanese attack. A large force was also required to garrison Madagascar after the successful campaign there, in order to protect the straits and ensure the safety of supply ships for East Africa and the Middle East.

As well as its military role in the war, the KAR was still regarded as a bastion of civil order in East Africa itself. As the Burma war drew to a close, civil disturbances in Uganda diverted the attention of the colonial governments. The crumbling Empire in India was of particular concern in Kenya, where the large Indian population was thought to be widely influenced by Indian nationalist politics. The local police forces were inadequate when it came to widespread public disorder and the loyalty of the KAR came to be tested once more. The subsequent actions of the askaris shows clearly how it was foreign service that was detested and which shook the loyalty of their compatriots in South East Asia. There the tendency towards mass disobedience was not indicative of feelings running throughout the Regiment as a whole and, despite discontent in Burma, there

was no African equivalent of Subhas Chandra Bhose's Indian National Army.

However, among the civilian population in Uganda, there was a growing restiveness. Intrigue among the Ugandan chiefs was not new and they continued to be as much the target of those who harboured grudges as did wealthy Europeans. In 1945, a series of strikes for higher wages, accompanied by accusations of corruption against the Omuwanika of Buganda, led to commotions in Uganda's towns. The centres affected were Kampala, Entebbe, Masaka, Koja and Mubende, all in Buganda; Jinja in Busoga and Mbarara in Ankole.[26] Jinja had a long association with the KAR as a recruiting centre and as the H.Q. of the KAR in Uganda. A company of KAR from the Jinja Infantry Training Centre had to be sent to Kampala to restore order because many of the local police force had been transferred to Karamoja to deal with cattle raiders. A route march through Kampala seemed enough to quell the riots.

Then in Koja, trouble flared up when rioters held up a lorry taking milk to the Polish refugee settlement. A platoon of the KAR fired on the mob to disperse them. In Jinja itself the KAR backed up the police in their control of demonstrators and were reinforced by a troop of armoured cars which eventually arrived from Kenya. Their wireless detachment proved invaluable.

The KAR were commended for their prompt action, particularly as they were only young recruits in training. There was no question that they might disobey their orders. There

was, in fact, little sympathy among the non-Ganda askaris for disturbances which were essentially due to internal power shuffles among the Ganda and which only incidentally involved the British administration. This was probably very fortunate for the British authorities because the Uganda police force was seriously under-manned; there was only one policeman to every 3,500 of the population.[27] There was no means whereby the police force could be expanded at a time when so many young men were wanted by the army. That the only forces available to back up the police were young recruits in training indicates the serious effect of the Burma war. The trained soldiers had gone abroad.

CHAPTER FOUR

Demobilisation and Resettlement

'When the war is over' was a catch phrase which raised many questions for those responsible for the ultimate repatriation of East African troops. Fears for internal security, the main role of the KAR after the cessation of hostilities, were expressed by the Governors of the East African territories.[1] The continued political tension in Buganda was also a matter of concern although the official report had concluded that anti-British feeling was not widespread in Uganda and that the riots had been stirred up by a minority of political agitators.[2] It was thought that soldiers returning to East Africa might contribute to such disturbances when released from the army and that those retained in the force might not be reliable in quelling civil unrest. It was generally thought by Europeans that the war would have a profound effect on the expectations and political consciousness of their colonial subjects who had taken part in it. The returning askari would have an enlarged horizon and would require careful consideration when demobilised. The issue of welfare for East Africans serving overseas was related to post-war reactions when they returned home. The authorities tried to avoid contacts between Africans and Asians because they feared the askaris might be stirred to thoughts of revolution.

As early as January 1941, when there seemed little hope of a prompt conclusion to the war in Europe, North Africa

or the Far East, Whites in authority were already worrying about 'when the war is over'. On 3rd January 1941 the Tanganyika Standard reported on a question raised in Kenya's Legislative Council on what to do with the large numbers of askaris returning to civilian life after the war. European officers had been guaranteed work by the government but no provision had been made for askaris as yet. The Kenyan Chief Secretary replied;

'The discharge of large numbers of askaris from East African units at short notice would clearly raise difficult problems which are fully realised but difficult to anticipate before the event.'[3]

A similar question was framed later in the same year by the member for the Coast in Kenya's Legislative Council. It was explained that the government had appointed a committee to examine the problem.[4] It was a serious matter and one which could not be ignored. As well as collecting political ideas and a new knowledge of the world, African soldiers employed in Burma had been taught new skills and trades. It was assumed that Africans would want to utilise these and that ex-soldiers might flood the towns looking for skilled employment. Askaris had also become accustomed to a better standard of living compared with the civilian population. Once discharged from the army, lack of money could become a grievance. In Tanganyika in April 1943, the government was considering a 'native' housing scheme which could employ ex-army blacksmiths and carpenters. Finding sufficient work for drivers and mechanics was thought to be more of a problem.[5]

It had been a deliberate policy to train Africans in practical skills rather than academic skills. The Native Industrial Training Depot had been set up for this purpose in 1924. The colonial powers wanted skilled labourers rather than office clerks; too many literate Africans were anathema to colonial theorists who believed in very gradual change only. During the war the Depot became known as the Native Artificer's Training Depot and undertook such tasks as building camps, lorry bodies and furniture for the army. In May 1941 the N.A.T.D. was taken over by the East African Army Service Corps and became a military unit training carpenters, blacksmiths, tinsmiths, tailors, fitters, electricians, sailmakers, painters and bricklayers.

The N.A.T.D. did not transform a rural agricultural labouring population into a sophisticated urban service industry, but at the time, many Europeans felt that mechanical knowledge did have an impact on the Africans who joined the army. After all, very few African recruits had had any training before they joined up. A few personal servants of whites could drive and a small number of Africans were working as garage mechanics before the war. However, most recruits arrived at the recruiting depot with a very limited experience of anything beyond cattle herding and village life. Inevitably, Europeans, trying to assess the effect on simple askaris, of having learnt skills, tended to put themselves into the place of the African. They saw the African as a simpler version of themselves, who would be fired by ambition and the wish to emulate

Europeans. Colonialism sought to teach Africa what success was in terms of careers, social advancement and materialism. If a European had a particular talent he would like to think that he would use it for the good of the community and to gain personal success. Africans did not always see life in the same terms. The authorities were wrong to expect returning askaris necessarily to be looking for skilled work, but this judgement can only be made with hindsight. At the time, the assumption was made and other suppositions were based on it.

British trepidation about the civil reabsorption of African soldiers after the war was not altogether without substance. There were good reasons in the early 1940s why it was thought some difficulty might be encountered. In the case of ex-army drivers it was certainly true that they were looking for work even before the war was over. Many Africans who had learnt to drive, enjoyed the status of being behind the wheel of a motor vehicle, a position from which they could look down on those on foot or holding the reins of a bullock cart. Although some wealthy and influential chiefs had expensive motor cars, in both town and countryside an African who possessed even a bicycle was widely envied. A soldier driving a lorry or truck was looked up to, literally and metaphorically. Their enthusiasm often prevented Africans from being good drivers in terms of the highway code and many had the disadvantage of having learnt to drive military vehicles away from the hazards of town traffic. In East Africa itself, Africans had a poor reputation as drivers and the main causes of dispute between soldiers and civilians

were road accidents in which pedestrians were knocked down and killed by reckless askaris.[6]

Of the askaris discharged from the KAR in 1943 and 1944, as unsuited for military service, a large number were drivers. Drivers tended to come from groups such as the Ganda and Kikuyu who were generally thought unsuited to military life. Nor did they always make good as army drivers. There was no obligation for the government to find work for these discharged soldiers in 1943 and 1944 and it was noted that there was a glut of drivers who expected to find work where they could use their skills.[7] The fears of British officials in East Africa were not, therefore, without foundation. Judging by the wishes of ex-army drivers in 1943 and 1944, they must have anticipated a similar demand for work among other skilled branches of the army who would return to civilian life in their hundred of thousands when the war was over. A Tanganyikan District Officer, E.E. Sabben Clare, wrote in 1945,

'It seems obvious that those with new skills and trades will not be content to return to agricultural life.'[8]

As this was the notion of many civil officials, plans were made to reabsorb askaris into a different role in society. Promises had been made that India would be granted dominion status when the war was over, and progress towards independence was accelerating. Africa was some distance behind but some colonials believed progress there was necessary if a foreign presence was to be morally justified. Early preparations for the return of peace were encouraged by

the British government's Colonial Development and Welfare Act 1940 which allocated an annual sum of £5 million for development schemes in the Empire. When the end of the war was in sight, British finance proved invaluable.[9] It was hoped that demobilisation and civil reabsorption would facilitate development and ex-askaris would become involved in projects such as land reclamation, tsetse fly clearance, irrigation and soil conservation.[10]

With this goal in view, discharge centres were established in each territory. Kenya had several, including Langata camp outside Nairobi, Maseno near Kisumu in Nyanza and Nyali in the coastal region. Best use was to be made of existing training facilities such as military training schools and civil training institutions like the Kenya and Uganda Harbours, the Education Department and the Public Works Department. As well as capitalising on trades which they might have learnt in the army, some askaris were expected to retrain after a period had been allowed for psychological readjustment to civilian life. Demobilisation did not seek to reverse the process of recruitment by stripping the askari of his boots and uniform and sending him back to his people clad only in a blanket.

"A" releases of Africans, that is of those who were in good physical condition, began on 7th September 1945 but the discharge of sick or injured soldiers began much earlier in the year. African ex-service men were to get free medical treatment whether they needed it as a result of their military service or not. Disabled soldiers were

dispersed to the civil hospitals in their home areas following transfers from military hospitals. Public spending on hospitals and the extension of the Nairobi rehabilitation centre was thought necessary and a generous grant was arranged for the Salvation Army to extend their training school for blinded ex-soldiers.[11] On humanitarian grounds such measures were vital. On political grounds they were advisable and indicated that at least the Kenyan government was prepared to take responsibility for those invalided in the war. The total number of Africans, recruited by the KAR in Kenya, who returned alive was 97,000 and of these, 22,000 had been dispersed before the start of "A" releases in September. These statistics show that nearly one quarter of the surviving askaris returning to Kenya were not considered physically fit, although some were discharged because they were unsuited to army life. This was a large proportion whose special medical needs the authorities could not afford to ignore without risking their credibility among the African population.

"A" releases took place in the following Discharge Centres where each askari was interviewed by a Civil Dispersal Officer:

Athi River Camp	-	Artillery
Athi Road Camp	-	Ordnance
Camp 'D' Kabete	-	Engineers
Karen Depot	-	East African Electrical and Mechanical Engineers
Killarney Camp	-	Signals

Ruiri Camp	-	Pioneers and Labour
Kabete Depot	-	East African Education Corps
Mbagathi Depot	-	East African Army Service Corps
Medical Corps Depot	-	East African Medical Corps
Gilgil Camp	-	Infantry

From September to December 1945, 18,895 men were released from these centres and at the beginning of 1946, 56,100 remained.[12] This illustrates another characteristic of civil reabsorption, that it was to proceed with caution so that large numbers of ex-askaris were not suddenly unleashed on the civilian population. This slow process was implied in the use of the word 'absorption'. The operation also took time because of the gradual termination of the campaign in Burma. The last battalions to leave that region, 5KAR and 13KAR, did so at the end of 1945 and then only for the rest camp at Dimapur. They had to wait much longer before they were shipped home. Another battalion, 4/4KAR was at Ranchi when the war came to an end but did not return to Kenya until May 1946. It was stationed at Gilgil for a short time and was disbanded almost immediately. Other battalions from different theatres of war did not return to the Discharge Centres as soon as hostilities ceased. The 15th Ugandan Battalion had been helping to garrison Somaliland and was not disbanded until March 1946. There was still military work to be done after the surrender of the Japanese, when the 14th Army occupied former Japanese-

held territory. The slow conclusion of the final cleaning up operations of the war gave civil authorities back in East Africa the valuable time to filter ex-askaris back into society.

In Uganda the Civil Reabsorption Organisation was set up by the government to make sure ex-askaris, returning with a wider experience would not feel frustrated. The Organisation offered all returning soldiers a form of training mainly through the artisan training centres. However, askaris could also apply to be teachers, medical orderlies, agricultural assistants, forestry assistants or veterinary assistants. One new technical training centre was opened for artisans but otherwise training took place within existing institutions such as army camps, hospitals and teacher training colleges, which were expanded for the short term. A classroom and dormitory were also built at the existing agricultural experiment station in Uganda.[13]

The technical school for ex-askaris in Uganda helped to train men in a variety of trades which would enable them to return to their homes as 'village craftsmen'. Although there were few villages in the English sense in East Africa, it was hoped that the askaris would use their skills for the benefit of the community and that this would lead to economic and social progress. The school had two European instructors, two Asian staff, 22 African instructors including ex-CSMs, 150 labourers and 200 African trainees. The following crafts could be learnt: brick and tile making, bricklaying, carpentry and joinery, blacksmith and tinsmith,

bicycle repairer, tailor, cobbler and shoemaker and tool-maker. Askaris received pay while they were at the school, some of which was paid into an account in their home area.

Training centres in Uganda were sited on a regional basis according to where the soldiers had originally been recruited. One was at Fort Portal in the Ruwenzoris for the western peoples of Uganda such as the Toro, Nyoro and Nyankoli. The centre for the Ganda and Soga was in Kampala, for the Gisu and Jopadola in Tororo, for the Teso in Soroti and for the Langi, Acholi, Madi, Kakwa and Alur in Lira. There was also a high grade technical school at Mbale. The system was well thought out and efficiently organised.

Although adequate facilities were provided for ex-askaris to find employment, it was not every man who availed himself of these opportunities. On October 1st 1945 an African Employment Bureau opened in Kenya to register ex-servicemen only and help them to find work. During the period October 1st to December 31st 1945, 382 Africans registered with the Bureau. Of these, 106 were drivers. Employment was found for 100 men, 282 remained unemployed, while there were 737 vacancies. Unfortunately, a large number of the ex-service tradesmen, such as the carpenters, were not sufficiently skilled to meet the employers' demands. Additionally, a significant number of Africans discharged from the army in October and November 1945 and registering for employment, were not physically fit for work. The majority of the men who registered with the Bureau were Nubi and Kikuyu, mostly drivers who wanted to be paid more than employers

were offering. There were vacancies for tractor drivers but army drivers were not suited to this.[14]

In Uganda, the authorities were more successful at settling ex-soldiers. Many who had qualified as carpenters or metal workers, during or after the war, found jobs in the Public Works Department. Others, with clerical skills, joined the Civil Service or went into African local government as village chiefs; returning askaris became such by local concensus. The police and prison services took many askaris and low key military recruiting continued after the war in Uganda's traditionally martial areas such as the West Nile.

Uganda had less success in producing its new breed of village craftsmen. By 1948 few ex-askaris were using the skills they had learnt in technical training centres. The exception seemed to be the tailors who had been given sewing machines. They would set up shop outside an Indian cloth merchant's store and offer to make up garments for customers purchasing cloth. They were the only group of tradesmen who showed the business enterprise the authorities expected of them.[15] On returning to Uganda in 1948, having helped to set up the technical training centres there, Colin Campbell met several of his ex-pupils. In his capacity as a 'co-operative' officer, teaching Africans to set up co-operative societies, Campbell realised that many former soldiers had settled back into the old way of life, which they had led before the war. Quite naturally, those who had survived the war began to forget their experiences of distant places.

The years they had spent in the KAR, in East Africa itself or further afield in the Middle East, Madagascar and South East Asia, became a dream, divorced from the reality of day to day life back among their own people. For many ex-soldiers the war had not had a revolutionising influence. In fact, the reverse happened and people felt more reluctant to leave the familiarity of their homeland for places further afield. This would be the privilege of a new generation. Many ex-askaris became respectable conservative citizens; they were the same men who had demonstrated their loyalty to the British and African authorities by volunteering for the KAR in the first place. Those who joined the police and prison services were the bulwarks of society. During the third phase of recruitment the authorities had continued to enrol men from the traditionally martial tribes alongside those who were required for more skilled tasks. Post war civil reabsorption catered for the majority but there was a vociferous dissatisfied minority who claimed to represent a larger group of disgruntled ex-servicemen than was actually the case.

In Tanganyika the returning askaris also settled well. Only those who were politically conscious before they went to war, had assimilated new ideas abroad. Some set up small ephemeral associations such as the 'Musoma New Living Boys' to demonstrate their modern outlook. Most returned to their shambas and picked up life where they had left off.[16] The Tanganyikan government regretted the seeming lack of enthusiasm shown by returning soldiers for new plans to reform the administration.[17]

In East Africa there was less trouble with ex-askaris than the authorities had anticipated. They spent their accumulated pay on new wives or squandered it on beer. After leading a strictly disciplined army life, they were content to return to simple agricultural pursuits.[18]

Ex-askaris may have learnt how to use firearms during the war but they did not put this to use in rebellion as the authorities had feared. Although Congress party activity escalated in India, in Africa, ejection of the European governments was far slower. It was not the war itself which politicised Africans but subsequent events and parallel developments in East Africa which took place independently of what was happening elsewhere in the world.

Ultimately it was not the people who had gone away to fight who protested against the colonial powers. Certainly some soldiers, restless at the restrictions of civilian life once the novelty of returning home had worn off, joined the freedom fighters wanting to throw off the colonial yoke. Some soldiers even played a prominent part in nationalist politics, but it was not always because of their experiences in the army. Other factors were also important, not least the sharp rise in prices in the late 1940s in East Africa. The Kikuyu who joined Mau Mau had never been recruited in large numbers compared to other groups such as the Kamba. More Kikuyu had enlisted during the third phase of recruitment when the KAR was offering more skilled roles. When the Kikuyu did enlist, they had avoided the infantry and preferred work as medical orderlies, drivers and clerks.

As such, their military training in the use of firearms would have been minimal. It would not have been significant in influencing the training of the members of Mau Mau as the military incompetence of the movement demonstrated. Kikuyu participation in this political organisation in Kenya was due more to the fact that many had stayed in Kenya during the war, rather than that a few had acquired a new outlook through foreign service in the KAR. That is not to say that Kikuyu leaders did not use the events of the war to add to the power of their political debate. In urging others to fight the British government Stanley Mathenge spoke of his wartime experience;

'I have been in the German and British war since 1940 ..... I have been to India, Madagascar, the Middle East, Burma, Rangoon, Kalewa, Singapore, Ceylon, Egypt, Ethiopia and Gigagiga. I have seen that thousands of Africans from all countries of this continent,including myself have been serving the white man.

'During the period I was in the war I saw a lot of injustices being done by the white soldiers to the black soldiers. During encounters with the Japanese and Italian enemy soldiers, there would be about 10,000 African soldiers and only about 50 white soldiers. These white soldiers who were supposed to be the leaders were always in the rear.'

Mathenge also pointed out the difference between the 800 shillings he received as accumulated pay at the end of the war and the Kenyan land and Kenyan government loans received

by British ex-soldiers who had fought in the same war.[19]

Karigo Muchai, another Mau Mau leader, described the four years he had spent in the army and how he was disappointed and disillusioned in June 1946, when he was discharged and found British promises of land and work for Africans unsubstantiated. Muchai was a trained army driver with a transport unit. It took him some time to find work as a driver in civilian life in Nairobi.[20]

Waruhiu Itote, General China, a prominent Mau Mau leader describes in his autobiography, how he not only picked up new political ideas while fighting abroad for the KAR but also the means of military organisation.[21] Similarly Bildad Mwaganu Kaggia, who enlisted as a clerk in the KAR in 1942, explained that he acquired a new political outlook which led him to become a prominent trade unionist after the war, as a direct result of his experiences in the Middle East.[22] These are examples of intelligent, educated men who saw irony in fighting a war to save British democracy from European fascism and Japanese militarism when East Africans had no representative institutions of their own. For them, the argument that East Africa was not ready for total independence did not hold water. Other Africans thinking along those lines tended to be those who had not joined the KAR. They were stimulated by both British propaganda which kept even the remotest areas in touch with the most recent events and a deterioration in living standards. Labour conscription had forced more people to travel away from their homes and at the same time, learn and spread ideas. Even the

uneducated dockworkers in Dar es Salaam in 1943 could argue:

> 'We are being told that we are at war with the Nazi German because the Nazi want to enslave the world, how is it that an English is making us a slave ...?'[23]

The third phase of recruitment, 1943 to 1945, was a difficult period when the British had to prophecy the post-war effect of their own recruiting propaganda and their attempts to expand the KAR by recruiting in the traditionally non-martial areas. After the war they had to count the cost, but it seems that in Kenya only was it possible to link post-war disturbances with the war-time experiences of Africans and then only with a minority of the freedom fighters.

EPILOGUE

PARALLELS AND CONTRASTS WITH WEST AFRICA

Troops from other parts of Africa, besides East Africa, were widely used during the Second World War, particularly from Britain's territories in West Africa. In mid-1939 the RWAFF numbered about eight thousand men.[1] In October of the same year the KAR numbered nearly thirteen thousand men. The KAR was understandably the larger force at this time because it drew its recruits from a wider area than that from which the RWAFF recruited. By the end of the war there were still less West Africans than East Africans in the armed forces and the proportion of West Africans remained the same, roughly 40 per cent of the combined total of men serving in the two forces, the KAR and RWAFF.

By May 1945 West African troops were deployed as follows:

ASIA	73,290
MIDDLE EAST	16,472
HOME COMMAND	56,100[2]

A comparison with the deployment of East African troops shows that there were considerably more West Africans in Asia than there were East Africans, and that there were more East Africans in their own home command. The statistics for the deployment of East Africans are as follows:

ASIA	46,050
MIDDLE EAST	30,000
HOME COMMAND	150,344

Certain similarities between the recruitment of these two groups of peoples to their appropriate regiments can be drawn.

There were three major phases of recruitment in East Africa and West Africa during the Second World War. They took place simultaneously but for strategic reasons they fulfilled slightly different needs. The first phase was from 1939 to 1941 to recruit both groups for the initial expansion of both regiments and for the Abyssinian campaign. Towards the end of that campaign less West Africans were stationed in East Africa because a second phase of recruiting had begun in West Africa to meet the threat from the Vichy French West African territories. The second phase of recruiting lasted through 1941 to 1942 in West Africa and through 1941 to 1943 in East Africa. The Vichy threat to British territories in West Africa explains why less West Africans were deployed in the Middle East, and why it was necessary to introduce conscription for non-combatants and intensify recruiting in East Africa to make up for the lack of West Africans. Once the Vichy threat was lifted and the Allies had secured victory in North Africa, both East and West Africans were freed to fight in Burma. However, garrisons were still needed in the Middle East and West Africans continued to be stationed there. The third phase of recruiting was from 1943 to 1945 in East Africa, specifically for the Madagascar campaign and the Burma war. In West Africa the third phase of recruitment began slightly later and lasted through 1944 and 1945 when it was apparent that West Africa was quite safe from Vichy. Throughout the war these two supplies of manpower

were balanced against each other so that if there was a lack of men from one force the other could compensate. The KAR and RWAFF were the largest forces of African soldiers employed by the British during World War Two but other Africans also played a useful part, notably those from the High Commission Territories and the Northern Rhodesian Regiment.

The theory that certain African races possessed qualities which made them good or bad soldiers was prevalent in West as well as in East Africa. It was perpetuated throughout the colonies by European army officers who transferred from one post to another. Nor was it only Africans who were subject to such categorisation in the theory of the martial races. In India Europeans also formed subjective opinions as to the military worth of the men in their command, basing their judgements on myths which linked martial characteristics with religious custom, environment, diet or economic conditions. The convenient theory of the archetypal martial races persisted wherever Europeans recruited colonial subjects into their armed forces.

In East Africa the grain eater was considered a better soldier than the banana eater. In West Africa, in the Gold Coast, the poorer northern peoples were thought to be more warlike than the richer peoples of the south. Coming from a wild and more barren area, the northerners were thought to be hardy and tough. Their simple, unsophisticated background and minimal contact with Europeans made them easier to influence and discipline. It was generally felt that these men would automatically substitute their white officer for their

chief and pay him customary loyalty and respect. This discipline was connected with the political organisation of the peoples to be recruited and those who had strong chieftains were purposely chosen to be soldiers. A further reason for this choice was the role of the chiefs in recruiting. A powerful and co-operative chief could provide numbers of good quality recruits. Successful British propaganda then convinced new askaris that in complying with the orders of their officers they also served their chief. The most suitable recruits in the Gold Coast tended to be in the remoter northern areas where the chief's influence was uninhibited by European administration but was still loyal to it.

European officers, and their wives too, all contributed to the store of what came to be accepted common knowledge by relating their experiences with particular tribes or individuals. In this way prejudices spread, stereotypes developed and ethnic groups gained reputations despite being composed of individuals. When European officers serving with the RWAFF or KAR met in the East African campaign, the Middle East or South East Asia, superficial views of which types of men made good soldiers were exchanged. The criterion of the "martial race" determined the nature of the army while the criteria for rejection of would-be recruits helped to shape the social, political and economic outlook of those who remained at home. In East and West Africa a parallel situation evolved. Soldier and civilian alike mirrored the image portrayed to them and if their qualities were not innate, they became so through the constant reiteration of them.

While a geographical distinction was made in the Gold Coast between the martial tribes of the north and the less martial peoples of the south, in East Africa such geographical distinctions were not so obvious, particularly in Tanganyika and Nyasaland. In Uganda, askaris were recruited from the Northern, Western and Eastern Provinces although there was a predominance from the Gulu and Chua Districts of the Northern Province. Recruiting also took place in the South of Uganda, in the Kingdom of Buganda, notably in the Bombo area, 23 miles north of Kampala, where the Nubi settlement was. In Kenya, askaris were drawn from a wide area but a large proportion came from Ukamba Province. It was contact with the Atlantic Ocean and foreigners which had made the people from the Gold Coast's coastal regions too sophisticated to join the RWAFF infantry. However, like the mission-school - educated Ganda and Kikuyu, they did opt for clerical and more skilled posts in the Frontier Force.

As the war progressed, the authorities in both East and West Africa were forced to recruit in new areas where the people did not have a long-standing military tradition. At the same time they were looking for a new type of soldier, capable of handling more sophisticated weaponry, who could be attracted into the army by the promise of status and the opportunity to acquire new skills. In the Gold Coast, recruiters turned to the Ashanti who were encouraged to become signallers and artisans. However, unlike the KAR, the RWAFF had to offer higher pay when recruiting in new areas in the south of the Gold Coast, in order to compete with labour wages in the gold mines. Army pay was not standardised in

the RWAFF until 1942, when all askaris were put on an equal financial footing according to rank rather than on the basis of their access to alternative well paid employment. In Nigeria the situation differed yet again. Nigerian tin production became very important following the fall of Malaya and the Dutch East Indies, but the miners were not well paid volunteers. Instead, they were conscripts forced to work in appalling conditions for very little money. In Nigeria, labour conscription for the tin mines was thought necessary from 1942 to 1944 because of severe labour shortages aggravated by the demands of the military recruiters.

The competition between labour wages and army pay was a significant factor in slowing down recruitment and causing desertions in the Gold Coast. Cocoa plantations and mines offered pecuniary advance with less commitment than that required by the RWAFF. In the southern parts of Tanganyika and in Nyasaland, a similar situation had arisen whereby Africans opted for well paid work in the mines of Rhodesia and South Africa, rather than enlist for military service. Eventually the military authorities in East Africa had to reach a compromise with the Witwatersrand Native Labour Association in order to limit the number of migrant workers going south.

In Kenya the situation differed from that in both Nyasaland and the Gold Coast. In Kenya, men went into the bush to hide from the District Officers recruiting and registering labourers for the settler farms. In the Gold Coast, Africans hid from army recruiting parties. In Kenya, white farmers

complained constantly of desertions from the farms and plantations and by 1942, African labourers on leave for more than a month had to carry a pass.[3] In the Gold Coast, desertions from the army were over 15 per cent by 1943.[4] They increased at times of planting and harvest, and, as was the case in East Africa, when embarkation overseas was imminent.

In Kenya, measures were taken to try and relieve the labour situation on settler farms when, in 1941, recruitment to the AAPC and EAMLS was temporarily suspended until early in 1942. In the Gold Coast, discussions on the conflict between military and labour recruitment led to a temporary closure of the gold mines in November 1942. This decision was similar to that taken in East Africa regarding migrant mine workers from Nyasaland and Tanganyika. In Tanganyika, labour recruiting operations for privately owned farms and sisal estates were curtailed during 1941[5] but these restrictions were lifted when sisal became an official priority following the loss of Malaya to the Japanese. This went some way towards satisfying the estate owners who had demanded a Native Labour Committee as existed in Kenya. Nigeria was similarly affected by the fall of Malaya as the Allies lost a major supply of tin and vegetable oils which increased the demand for Nigerian groundnuts, palm oil and tin. These Nigerian products, along with Kenyan food and Tanganyikan sisal were official priorities and government intervention to safeguard their production helped to create the rivalry between military and labour recruitment in these territories.

East Africans and West Africans saw the Second World War

from different perspectives. Their respective attitudes were shaped by the varying intensity of British propaganda and its effectiveness and by the reality of their differing strategic situations. For East Africans the reality of the conflict was most immediate to Tanganyikans and Kenyans. For the former, the far flung and large scale operations of 1939 to round up the German settlers brought the threat of Nazism to the doorstep of all but those in the remotest districts. For the latter, the influx of African troops from other parts of the continent and the mustering of forces on the northern frontier, also brought home the immediacy of the hostilities with the Axis powers. For those Tanganyikans and Kenyans living in the coastal towns, particularly Mombasa and Dar es Salaam, practice blackouts in case of air-raids emphasised the danger of Japanese military expansion encroaching on Africa's eastern shores. British propaganda and news of air-raids on London helped to exaggerate the constancy and degree of danger. It was important to create a sense of urgency in order to get an enthusiastic response from the African population and to encourage army recruitment. In West Africa official propagandists and broadcasters stressed the potential threat of a hostile Vichy regime on their borders. Most vulnerable was the Gambia whose narrow tongue of territory flanking the Gambia river, was surrounded on all sides but the sea, by the French colony of Senegal. In October 1941 the Gold Coast Regiment was recalled from East Africa to meet the possibility of a Vichy threat and rapid recruitment took place from then on, until late in 1942. For West Africans, there were practice black-

outs in Lagos and the internment of German citizens, which showed the reality of war to a few, and the siting of Allied military bases and airfields to supply the campaign in North Africa, which brought the fact of the war to many more.

Good propaganda was necessary from the outset of the war in both East and West Africa but contrasting developments in the tone and presentation of material took place in the two regions. To begin with it was not aimed at encouraging the recruitment of men to the RWAFF and KAR but assumed African co-operation with the war effort in general. In both East and West there were similar instances of African generosity in giving money and food to the authorities. The war gifts of the Chagga in Tanganyika have already been described and in Nigeria the Native Authorities competed with each other in making protestations of loyalty to Britain, while groups and individuals donated money or made interest-free loans to the government.[6] In West Africa the propaganda strove to instil a fear of Hitler as an individual and to portray the Nazis as monsters who would perpetuate terrible crimes against Africans. It was argued that if Britain fell to Hitler then the British Empire would be taken over by the Germans too, a possibility if not a probability until the turn of the tide in Britain's favour after the victory of El Alamein. In East Africa the propaganda was less intense but in a similar vein.

In 1942, the East African and West African authorities responded to the increased demands for soldiers in different ways. In East Africa propaganda was stepped up and a new

style of recruiting campaign developed. In West Africa the authorities chose to resort to an extension of conscription. Although East Africans were conscripted to the non-combatant units in some cases, others remained volunteers, as did all the infantry. The enterprise of the East African Mobile Propaganda Unit helped to prevent the introduction of full scale conscription to the armed forces. Mobile cinemas also toured West Africa with films supplied by the Colonial Film Unit which had been set up to make films to explain the war to uneducated audiences, particularly in Africa.[7] However, in the Gold Coast in 1941, conscription was introduced for drivers and artisans to serve in the Middle East. The system of quotas, administered by District Commissioners in the Northern Territories, had proved to be a failure in the recruiting drive of 1940. Then the Gold Coast government had introduced a National Service Register giving civil authorities the power to recruit labourers and soldiers if the quotas were not filled. They still remained hopeful that this law would not prove necessary. In East Africa conscription was avoided, apart from for the Pioneers after 1942. A large proportion of the East African Pioneers were volunteers but many welcomed the opportunity of transferring to the combatant units if the chance arose.

Evasion of the Compulsory Service Ordnance in the Gold Coast, was extensive, especially in Ashanti and the coastal regions. There were riots at Konongo in 1942 and at Kamawu in 1943, involving young men opposed to joining the army.[8] There is little evidence of similar disturbances over the same issue in East Africa. In fact the incident at Garba Tula

in 1939 was interpreted by the military authorities as an indication that the East African Pioneers involved wished to join the army proper. Their protest was against their inferior status as non-combatants not infantry.

However, all Africans were apprehensive of foreign service and reacted by evading enlistment in West Africa or by mass disobedience in East Africa. For East Africans, service in the Abyssinian campaign was less of an upheaval than it was for West Africans, although many East Africans still travelled by sea to take up active service. West Africans had further to travel and saw fewer reasons for ejecting the Italians from Abyssinia. For Kenyan Africans this campaign was practically on their doorstep. Once the Italians were in retreat, West Africans were recalled to their homelands. From their point of view they felt as if they had 'done their bit', and in the event of Vichy France adopting an unaggressive policy in colonial Africa, West Africans in the RWAFF assumed that their part in the war was over. They did not welcome the decision to employ them in the Burma War. Neither did East Africans, who had served in the East African campaign to its conclusion and had also been sent to the Middle East in greater numbers than West Africans.

The British needed persuasive propaganda to convince the askaris of the RWAFF and KAR that they were still defending their homelands by fighting outside the continent of Africa. Both Regiments sought new ways of improving recruitment and training soldiers capable of operating the more modern weapons of warfare, used in the Far East against the Japanese.

In East Africa the need for skilled soldier 'tradesmen' led the authorities to test new areas of recruitment and enlist the semi-educated types, such as the Ganda and Kikuyu, in greater numbers. Good chances of promotion to the non-commissioned ranks and the added status of belonging to a skilled unit attracted more men to be drivers, signallers, machine gunners and members of the artillery. Similarly, in the Gold Coast, drives to recruit in new areas helped to provide tradesmen and specialists for the 81st and 82nd West African Divisions. Like the KAR, the RWAFF turned to the more sophisticated people of Ashanti and the coastal regions. Thus the character of both Regiments altered as the war progressed.

The urgent need for reinforcements to serve in South East Asia revealed another parallel between East and West Africa, that of the poor state of health of the African population. The rejection rate of recruits on medical grounds increased as the supply of physically fit men diminished. Even as early as 1941, the poor health of the Ha and Fipa of Tang-anyika had been noted and in the East and Central Provinces of the Gold Coast from March to April 1941 the army rejected 40 per cent of African men because they were not physically fit. As the need for men intensified at the time of the Burma war, so the military authorities consciously reduced the required standard of health for acceptance into the RWAFF and KAR. The minimum height for recruits was also lowered. It was decided that although recruits would not grow any taller by joining the armed forces, an improved diet and plenty of exercise would help to build up their physique

during the training period so that fit men could be sent overseas. The authorities did not tackle the question of malnutrition and widespread ill health among the civilian population but chose to provide good medical facilities for those who did join the armed forces.

East and West African authorities were concerned about the problem they envisaged of demobilisation and resettlement once the war was over. In each case their fears were largely unfounded. In West Africa plans for resettlement of soldiers were drawn up by 1943. It was decided that the men should be returned to their homes gradually so that large numbers did not hang around the towns. The majority of Africans returning to the Gold Coast were farmers and they were as willing to settle to their previous way of life as the government was that they should do so. Thus the civil reabsorption of men from the Northern Territories was a relatively smooth affair. The same situation occurred in East Africa where those who had led a simple rural existence were eager to return to their homes and families and continue as before. In East Africa extensive plans to retrain ex-soldiers as village craftsmen misinterpreted the aspirations of the returning askaris to play a part in the development to their community. The authorities in East Africa showed as much concern for the askari who returned from the war with no skills, as they did for his skilled counterpart. Demobilisation centres sought to equip all ex-soldiers with skills before resettling them in civilian life. In contrast, in West Africa the authorities aimed to resettle the unskilled askaris as quickly as possible, reversing the process of

recruitment and returning Africans to the 'bush' without any basic education in technical skills. As it turned out, the West African authorities had a better picture of what the ex-soldiers from the agricultural areas, actually wanted.

In the case of silled soldiers, both East and West African authorities expressed fears that they would want to utilise their newly acquired skills in civilian life. In Nigeria, the Labour Department was alarmed at the prospect of the return of 100,000 servicemen, many of whom had learnt mechanical skills in the army and would expect wage employment. In the Gold Coast, the government set up resettlement advice centres to assist army tradesmen in finding jobs. As part of recruiting propaganda, they had been promised jobs and promotion at the end of the war but there were not enough jobs for all aspiring tradesmen. As in East Africa, there was particular difficulty in finding work for ex-army drivers. In Nigeria those with experience in the Field Ambulance of the West African Medical Corps, found work as drivers, health officers and medical assistants in dispensaries. However, there was not enough work for every skilled soldier to be settled in the job of his choice and some did help to swell the ranks of the unemployed in the cities. Ex-soldiers in East and West Africa returned to higher prices and found their army pay did not go as far as they might have anticipated, but it was not their grievance alone which caused post-war unrest in the colonies.

In Accra, discontent was caused by other issues such as the high price of imported goods and high food prices which made

many items prohibitive to all sectors of the African population. The authorities in East and West Africa envisaged mobs of ex-servicemen hanging around the towns, encouraging strikes and disturbances. They over-estimated the political role of returning soldiers, whose new skills and experiences, it was thought, would make them more worldly. In fact many ex-soldiers were the type to conform and sought well paid jobs alongside Europeans, rather than attempting to voice the grievances of the masses. The majority of soldiers in the Gold Coast forces were from the traditionally martial tribes even in 1945, and they remained comparatively complacent and easy to manipulate. In East Africa too, there was no widespread unrest instigated by ex-servicemen with a grudge against the authorities. In Kenya, while some Mau Mau leaders were ex-KAR, many were not; partly because they had been too young to join up during the war. Only a few could attribute their political ideas directly to their war-time experiences and their disappointments on returning to Africa when the war was over.

The conservative nature of ex-askaris is illustrated by the fact that many sought jobs in the police force. After the war a force of Nyasas were required to police Malaya[9] and they displayed no lack of enthusiasm to return to foreign parts. The Nyasas had always been considered good soldiers and they continued in this tradition. Their ancestors had formed the first two battalions of the KAR and had fought in two world wars. Although the wind of change was approaching British colonies in Africa, some factors remained constant.

PEOPLES OF NYASALAND

KEY TOWNS e.g. ZOMBA
PEOPLES e.g. YAO

MASOKO
NYAKYUSA
NKONDE
KARONGA
KAMANGO
AHENGA
NGONI
TUMBUKA
LAKE NYASA
NTONGA
NYANJA
NGONI
RIMBA
NCHEWA
NYASALAND
NGONI
NGONI
YAO
NGANJA
CHIPETA
NAMWERAS
NGOCHE
CHINGA
YAO
NGURU
ZOMBA
LAKE SHIRWA
MBWE
THE SHIRE HIGHLANDS
MBO
Shire River
MANDALA
CHIKUNDA
River Zambezi
TANGANYIKA
PORTUGUESE EAST AFRICA

PEOPLES OF UGANDA

KEY

DISTRICTS e.g. WEST NILE

TOWNS e.g. BOMBO

PEOPLES e.g. TESO

SUDAN

KAKWA

MADI

KUKU

ACHOLI

WEST NILE

Albert Nile

ACHOLI

GULU

CHUA

KITGUM

KARAMOJONG

ALUR

LUGBARA

ZANG'I

NYORO

LIRA

CONGO

LAKE ALBERT

BUNYORO

UGANDA

TESO

SOROTI

Victoria Nile

LAKE KYOGA

NYORO

KONJO

TORO

RUWENZORI MOUNTAINS

FORT PORTAL

TORO

MBALE

SEBEI

MT. ELGON

KENYA

MUBENDE

BUGANDA

NUBI

BOMBO

GWERE

SOGA

TORORO

KAMPALA

KOJA

JINJA

GANDA

ENTEBBE

LAKE EDWARD

HIMA

MBARARA

MASAKA

LAKE VICTORIA

NYANKOLI

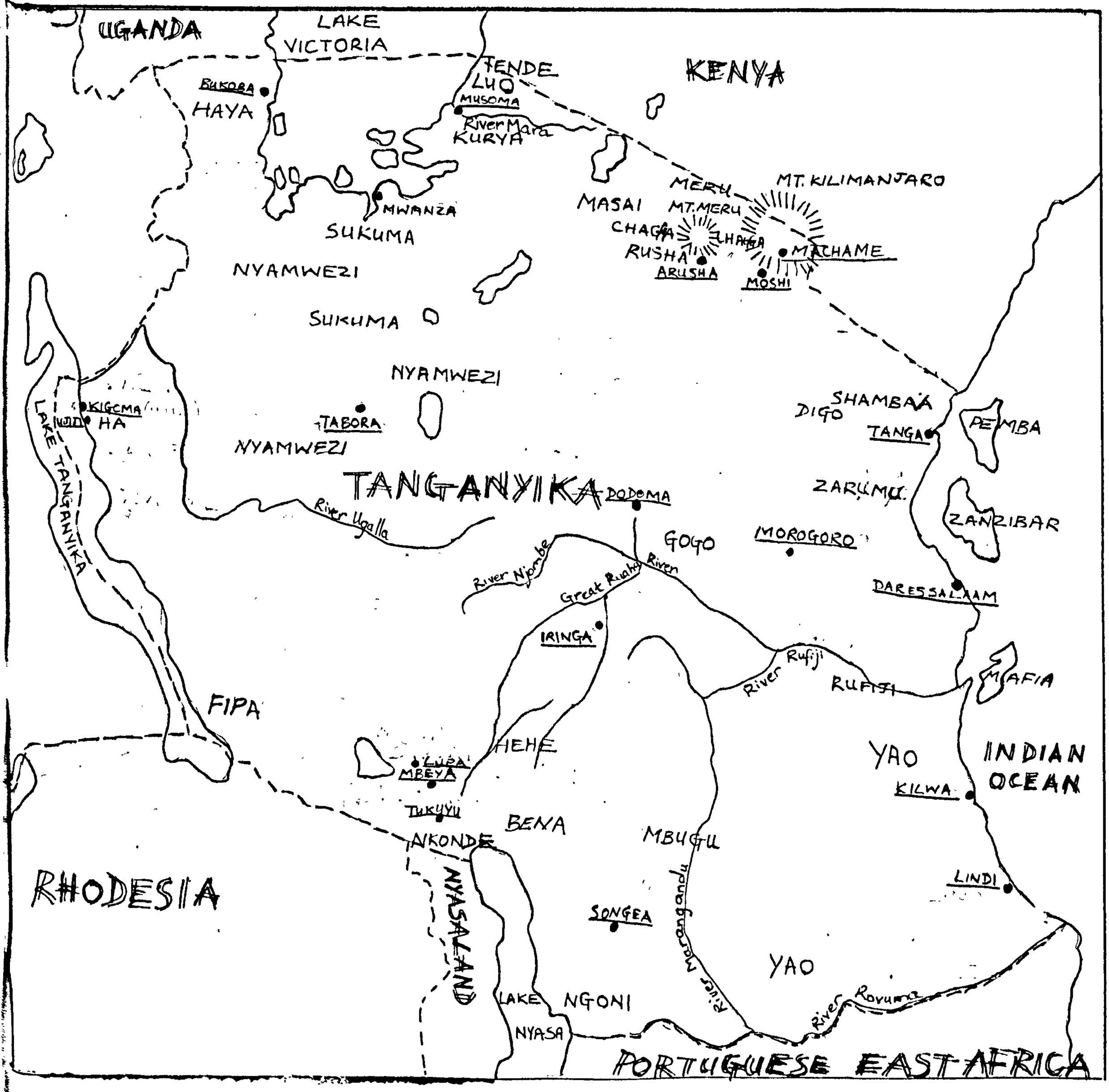
188

KEY
TOWNS e.g. MOMBASA
DISTRICTS e.g. KAVIRONDO
PEOPLES e.g. KIKUYU

PEOPLES OF KENYA

SUDAN
ABYSSINIA
GALLA
LAKE RUDOLF
TURKANA
MOYALE
NORTHERN FRONTIER DISTRICT
SOMALILAND
NDA
SUK
MT. ELGON
JUBALAND
SOMALI
SWAHILI
KITOSH
LUYIA
SAMBURU
GARBATULA
MERU
MARAKWET
ELGEO
SAMBURU
ISIOLO
LUO
NYANZA
PROVINCE
NANDI
KANYUKI
MT. KENYA
EMBU
NANDI
NYERI
LUYIA
NAKURU
KIKUYU
KAMBA
River Tana
GILGIL
KIKUYU
LUO SOUTH
KAVIRONDO
KISII
KIPSIGIS
TENDE
LUMBWA
KURYA
MACHAKOS
KITUI
NAIROBI
KAREN
KAMBA
River Athi
TARU
DESERT
MASAI
NAMANGA
MERU
MASAI
SWAHILI
MT. KILIMANJARO
TANGANYIKA
BURAO
MOMBASA

PEOPLES OF TANGANYIKA



KEY

TOWNS e.g. • SONGEA

PEOPLES e.g. ZARAMO

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14. CO 820 55/34458/C Welfare of Colonial Troops (African) in the Far East

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48/34451	East African Military Labour Service
48/34485/1	African N.C.Os
48/34515	Conditions of Service of Native Other Ranks Enlisted in the African Commands
49/34525	African Pioneer Corps
49/36020	Discipline
49/36037	Military Appointments under Colonial Governments, Procedure for Filling
52/34274	Uganda Defence Force
53/34354/1	Military Units Legislation 1944
55/34504	Post War Organisation of African Forces
55/34525	African Pioneer Corps
55/34458/C	Welfare of Colonial Troops (African) in the Far East

WO 106

2334	Telegrams between GOCEA and War Office September - November 1939
2335	East Africa Report December 1939

WO 169 War Diaries

758	1KAR
772	5KAR
778	7KAR
887	Jinja Training Centre

WO 276

11	Local Defence Forces for non-Europeans
73	Civil Unrest in Uganda
74	Civil Disturbances - Uganda
79	Madagascar

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Rhodes House possesses a collection of notes and reminiscences compiled in response to an Aide Memoire circulated to former officers in the KAR. These papers are located under the heading Mss. Afr. The questions of the Aide Memoire are accompanied by a commentary by Miss K.P. Barratt, M.A. Papers of individual officers are located in the following boxes.

Box 1

Colonel D.J. Bannister, M.B.E., M.C., who served with 1 KAR.

Lt. Colonel R.C. Frederick who served with 6KAR.

Box 2

Major C.F. Broomfield who served with 4KAR from January 1941 to March 1958 in British Somaliland, Abyssinia, Ceylon, India, Burma, Mauritius and Uganda.

Brigadier G.H. Cree who served with 6KAR in Tanganyika from 1931 to 1936, was D.A.A.G. at HQ 11th African Division October 1940 to July 1941 and was Brigade Commander of 25th East Africa Brigade in Burma and Assam from 1944 to 1945.

Lieutenant E.G. Crews who served with 3KAR from 1944 to 1945.

Box 4

G. Elcoat who served with a Tanganyikan battalion from 1942 to 1943, 3KAR from 1943 to 1944 and 4KAR from 1944 to 1945.

Box 5

W.S. Gimber who served with the KAR from December 1940 to December 1945, as Adjutant with 1/6KAR and 2KAR and 2i/c of 3KAR.

Lieutenant Colonel H.P.L. Glass, M.C., who served with the second Battalion of the KAR from 1939 to 1940, and later with 18(Nyasaland) KAR in 1943.

Reverend J.E. Gregory who was chaplain of the 26th East African Brigade in Burma.

Major E.G.C. Haigh who served with 3KAR from July 1939 to July 1940, when he became Company Commander of 2/3 KAR until December 1942, when he was appointed 2 i/c of 5/6KAR and served as such until January 1945.

Box 6

Lieutenant Colonel H.L. Jenkins who served with 25 Corps Signals from 1941 to 1945.

Box 10

Major R.W. Kettlewell, C.M.G., who was in the KARRO in Zomba from 1938 to 1939, served with 1/2KAR from 1940 to 1942 and with 21st East African Brigade in Ceylon from 1942 to 1943.

Major T.R. King who served with 5KAR from 1939 to 1945.

Colonel Thomas Leahy, Company Commander of 3KAR from 1937 to 1939, of 5KAR from 1939 to 1940 and 2i/c of 2KAR from 1940 to 1941.

Box 11

Captain R.A. Malyn who served with 4KAR and 44KAR from 1940 to 1943.

Major General R.S.N. Mans who was with 1/6KAR from November 1940 to May 1945.

Colonel J.H.S. Martin, with 1/1KAR and 1/6KAR as Company 2i/c from 1940 to 1942.

Box 15

John Clark Murray was Convoy Commander with 55(SR) G.T. Company, then joined 2/1KAR and later the East African Civil and Military Police.

John Hewlett Nunneley who served with 3/6KAR and 11KAR in Abyssinia from January to December 1942, was with HQ of 25th East African Brigade until December 1943 and served with 3/6KAR as 2i/c mortar platoon, Intelligence Officer, Captain and lastly Adjutant in Ceylon and the Kabaw from January 1944 to August 1945.

Lieutenant Colonel George Gordon Robson who served with 1/6KAR and Depot 6KAR from 1939 to 1943 and then became Chief Instructor at the East Africa Tactical School from 1943 to 1944 when he became a Lieutenant Colonel with 12KAR. He transferred to 3/6KAR later in 1944 and served with that battalion in Burma and India.

Box 16

Hugh S. Senior joined the KARRO in 1936, was seconded to 1KAR in Tabora and then trained with 6KAR in Dar es Salaam from May to July 1939. After a period of home leave he was posted in the Depot training recruits for 6KAR and raising a new battalion, 2/6KAR. In June 1940 he left Tanganyika to serve with 2/6KAR in the East African Campaign.

Reginald Sheldon who was adjutant at the East Africa Signal Training Centre and Depot from 1944 to 1945.

Alexander D. Shireff who served with 5KAR in Kenya and Madagascar from 1940 to 1943 and commanded 'B' Company 5KAR in Burma from 1944 to 1945.

Brigadier C.H. Stoneley was with the KAR's Northern Brigade Signal Section from 1936 to 1940.

Box 18

Major Henry A. Walker who served with 6KAR.

Major C. St John Wallis who served with 4KAR.

Major Arthur S. Watts, medical specialist with RAMC from 1944 to 1946.

Major R.D. West who served with 4KAR.

Major G.B. Whitworth who served with 5/6KAR and 6KAR from 1945 to 1946.

Box 19

Colonel H. Williams who served with 1KAR and 6KAR before the war and commanded 13KAR from 1944 to 1945.

Lieutenant Colonel E.C.T. Wilson V.C. who served with the Somaliland Camel Corps from 1939 to 1940, was 2i/c of 4/6KAR from 1943 to 1944 and transferred to 11KAR to serve in India and Burma from 1944 to 1945.

B.A. Young who was an Instructor in the Kenya Regiment from 1940 to 1943 and later became Brigade Intelligence Officer with the 25th East Africa Brigade.

George Kennedy Young was Intelligence Officer with 11th African Division during 1941 and by 1943 was Chief Instructor at the Command Intelligence School.

Box 17

Sir Anthony Swann who served as a Major with 2/3KAR and 5/6KAR from 1940 to 1944.

The biographical information given is only intended to cover periods relevant to the thesis and does not give comprehensive details of each officer's career.

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ORAL INTERVIEWS

A number of people involved with recruiting in East Africa in a civil or military capacity, or who served with KAR units during the Second World War, were kind enough to give interviews.

George D. Badger (Stratford on Avon, 3 August 1984) was an agricultural officer before the war and served with the East African Pioneers in the Middle East from November 1941 to January 1944.

Peter Bleackley, M.B.E., B.A. (Henley on Thames, 25 October 1982), was a District Officer in Tanganyika during the Second World War.

Colin Campbell (Leamington Spa, 25th April 1984), served in the KAR during the war and worked in Civil Reabsorption of ex-askaris after the war.

Brian Kirwan (Cheltenham, 27 March 1982, 16 July 1983) was brought up in Kenya and was closely involved in recruiting for the KAR in Uganda before and during the Second World War.

C.A.L. Richards, C.M.G., (Swindon, 29 May 1982) was in close touch with recruiting for the KAR in Uganda between 1937 and 1939. He was a foundation member of the 7KAR and was involved in expansion recruiting in Uganda from August 1939 to March 1941.

George Webster (Beckford, 12 November 1983) served with the East African Armoured Car Regiment, formerly the East African Reconnaissance Squadron. He served in the East African Campaign and then trained at OCTU. By 1943 the East African Armoured Car Regiment had become the Kenya Armoured Car Regiment and was posted to India. Webster, as a Forestry Officer in civilian life, had to leave the Regiment and help to boost timber production. He still kept in touch with the Regiment and closely followed its progress overseas.

Colonel Humphrey Williams (Petersfield, 10 January 1983) served with 1KAR from 1931 to 1935, in Nyasaland and Tanganyika. In 1936 he transferred to 6KAR and served in Tanganyika. From 1944 to 1945 he commanded 13KAR in South East Asia.

In addition to these oral interviews, Mr J.D. Thomson of Fochabers, Morayshire was kind enough to write of his experiences with the King's African Rifles in a personal communication to the author, 6 November 1983. Mr Thomson served with 6KAR and then the Uganda Police before the war. In 1939 he rejoined the KAR and received the command of a recruit company at the Infantry Training Centre, Jinja. At the end of 1941 he was posted to a Kenya battalion.

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